

Sounding syllables

– a study of the relationship between text and music in Olivier Messiaen's song cycle *Harawi*

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Acknowledgements

Without the help from others, this thesis would never have been completed, and I will therefore like to express my gratitude to several persons. At first, I will thank my supervisor Erling E. Guldbrandsen, who have guided my through this work process, and given me invaluable advice when I was stuck in my writing. I will also thank Ståle Wikshåland, who supervised my thesis at an early stage, and who offered insightful and helpful suggestions. Furthermore, I will thank Kristin Norderval for supportive comments and for skillful proof-reading at the final stage. I also thank Håkon Heggstad for reading through parts of my text. Besides, Håkon deserves a special thanks for having introduced me to Messiaen's song cycle *Harawi* several years ago. I had never heard Messiaen's songs, and was immediately struck by this remarkable piece of music that was to become the subject of this thesis.

Finally, I will thank my closest family. My son, Erlend, was born in the course of this work, and has probably listened more to Messiaen's music than most two-year-olds. He deserves a big thanks for hugs and laughter. I also thank my mother, Ruth, for having spent hours looking after Erlend, while I was writing. Finally, my deepest thanks go to Thomas, for useful advice on my writing process, for generosity – and for love.



1. Introduction

What is taking place when text meets music? In vocal composition, two distinct means of expression integrate. The musical and textual line of a song can blend seamlessly, but may also contrast profoundly. When one is suggestive, the other is generally more explicit. The way in which composers deal with the relationship between these two dimensions, is an intriguing issue which I set about to examine in the following pages. The subject is explored through analyses of one particular vocal composition, the song cycle *Harawi* by the French composer Olivier Messiaen. Analyses of the musico-poetic material of the songs, constitutes the main part of this thesis. However, the study aims also at placing the composition within a cultural, historical and theoretical context, yet with the questions of text-music relationship in mind.

Throughout history, music and poetry have formed close bonds. In early cultures song was considered a primal form of creativity, and no distinction was made between the two art forms. The ancient Greek word *lyra* implied song with lyre accompaniment, and today we employ the derivation of the term, *lyric*, to indicate the musical qualities in poetry and to suggest how the two art forms share basic qualities. When we speak of "the language of music" or "the musicality of poetry" we hint at this association. Both poetry and music are organized by temporal means such as rhythm, phrasing and accents, and both occur in the immediate flow of time. The temporal and rhythmic qualities inherent in both music and poetry, combine them naturally into one coherent expression. Lawrence Kramer alludes to this when saying: "Music and poetry share a kind of temporality in which the experience of passing time is concretized and perceptually enriched between a definite beginning and a definite ending" (Kramer:8).

Within the field of musicology, the issue of text-music relationship is wide-ranging and complex. To determine the limits of the study, I will focus on this particular work, the song cycle *Harawi*, written for voice and piano, by the French composer, Olivier Messiaen. With the general topic of text-music relationships in mind, this is a deliberate choice for several reasons:

– Messiaen considered the lyrics as an intrinsic part of the musical structure. He wrote his own poetry to nearly all of his vocal works, including *Harawi*, arguing that his musical style was too complex to couple with a pre-existent poem.

– In Messiaen's music the distinction between musical and verbal expressions can be difficult to define. He attached elaborate programmatic ideas to his instrumental music and these were an intrinsic part of the total musical expression. Vice versa, through his musical techniques, he sought to communicate verbal messages precisely. In light of this dimension of his music, it is particularly interesting to study how he combined the two expressions by setting music to his own poetry.

– Composed in 1945, *Harawi* is an interesting work to examine as it seems to link to different traditions within the history of vocal composition. In format and instrumentation it adheres to the romantic Lied tradition. Furthermore, the work is strongly influenced by the surrealist trend at that time, as well as pointing towards pioneering vocal compositions of the Post-war period.

When working on *Harawi*, Messiaen exploited a multitude of materials. The way in which these elements are intertwined and transformed by his unique musical language makes it a highly compelling work. It captured my attention the first time I heard it, and this is the major reason why I wish to explore it through this thesis. So what kind of a work is it? Before elaborating the points above as well as the objectives of the study, a brief account of the song cycle's historical background and overall characteristics will be outlined:

Between 1945 and 1949 Messiaen composed three works based on the medieval myth of Tristan and Isolde, his so-called Tristan trilogy. This included the song cycle *Harawi*, for soprano and piano, the *Turangalîla symphony* scored for large orchestra and *Cinq Rechants* for unaccompanied choir. *Harawi*, the first part of the trilogy, is prominent in Messiaen's production for several reasons. First of all, it interrupts the succession of compositions based on religious subjects. *Harawi* deals with the idea of human love, although it depicts a love of cosmic dimensions. The songs are subtitled *Chant d'amour et de mort*, and this alludes to Tristan and Isolde's fatal love relationship. Messiaen considered the mythical love story as a symbol of grand, eternal love, and one of the main characteristics of the work is the way in which he liberates himself from the narrative of the myth. Instead of adhering to the story's logical timeline, he creates a visionary dreamworld where the essential mythical idea of

transcendental love is explored. Both in music and text, Messiaen draws on an astounding multitude of components. The main source of inspiration is the original Celtic myth, yet Richard Wagner's music drama *Tristan* was also influential. Besides, Messiaen was strongly affected by surrealist painting and poetry, and this is particularly apparent in the imagery of the lyrics. Ultimately, he utilizes mythical material from the Inca folklore, including phrases from the old Inca language Quechua. By weaving a foreign language into the French text, the songs attain a new and surprising dimension, which contributes strongly to their power of expression. Generally, the diversity in textual, musical and thematic material, is an essential characteristic of the work.

Messiaen composed his song cycle at a time when composers began to express radical ideas of how text and music related. In the domain of poetry, the French symbolists of the late 19th Century, of which Stéphane Mallarmé was a central figure, declared that the meaning of a poem is to be found in the poetic context alone. They were thus fascinated with the musicality and sounds of the words, rather than with their semantic meaning. The Symbolist ideas were developed further by Dada- and surrealist writers who experimented widely with poetry. These poets emphasized its performative aspects, and created a phonetic, musicalized poetry, which appeared as incantatory streams of irrational syllables. The Dadaist Hugo Ball was known for his phonetic poetry where his performances included bodily movements. The surrealist Tristan Tzara and others performed collective "simultaneous poems", including whistling or sirens. Influenced by this aspect of Surrealism, certain Post-war composers began to revise their approaches, and their attitude towards musical settings of texts changed fundamentally. Generally speaking, their focus shifted from "what is meant" to "the way of meaning it" or from the semantic meaning of the text to its syntactical, phonetic or rhythmic features (Enge:15). This change can also be explained as a result of a closer connection between the field of text theory and musical analysis. In this current of new ideas, Messiaen's student Pierre Boulez, as well as the Italian composers Luciano Berio and Luigi Nono, were central figures. This trend resulted in radically new vocal works during the 1950s and later, for which *Harawi*, with its focus on the sonority of language, may be regarded as an important forerunner.

For the Post-war composers, the poetic form largely determined the compositional process. What mattered in music's contact with poetry, Boulez declared, was structure: "The poem must be more than 'a frame for the weaving of ornamental arabesques'; it must be centre and

absence of the whole body of sound: ‘centre’ because everything in the music is derived from the words, and ‘absence’ because the process of musical composition has completely consumed them” (Boulez in Griffiths:80). As a poet-composer, Messiaen stands somewhat apart from this line of thoughts. Rather than adhering to the structure of a pre-existent poem, he created his own texts, so as to be in charge of all dimensions of the composition. He offers sensible explanations for this, founded in the rhythmical aspects of his compositional techniques: ”In all my works with texts, I’ve always written the lyrics. I’ll admit that this was for practical reason: my music has great rhythmic complexity and I need words that adapts to my rhythm. This means I allow myself the possibility to modify a word according to rhythmic necessity” (Samuel:237).

The poems of *Harawi* were thus intended as an integral part of a musical expression without any distinct literal value. However, the words were not written for their sound alone. All the components of the song cycle, whether they are textual or musical, are clearly intended to elucidate the myth’s essential idea. The work may seem to be an improvisatory play between its various components, yet all parts of Messiaen’s music bear significance in one way or the other. “What is interesting for analysis of Messiaen’s music is that nearly all the individual components of his musical language act as signifiers in some capacity” (Shenton:7). To examine the *Harawi* songs thus implies to look both to its compositional structures and to the meanings of the text. Although these two aspects are particularly strongly attached in Messiaen’s music, this is something that applies to all vocal works: ”Both music and poetry juxtapose elements that are referential, mimetic, or conceptual with purely formal patterns that are largely independent of external meanings” (Kramer:5). The way in which these two facets interact will be a main factor of my analyses, reminding myself that the formal arrangements of the songs are “always anchored by a referential fiction” (Kramer:5).

1.1. Objectives

“My poems are made with the music and for the music” (Messiaen in Davidson:9).

Messiaen’s statement is the general point of departure for this study. In *Harawi*, he aimed for a textual line that would merge with the musical line, and words were chosen by virtue of their sound qualities rather than their semantic meaning. Moreover, both textual and musical

elements were intended to elucidate the composition's mythical subject. Accordingly, the aim of this study is twofold. Its primary objective is to examine how the sonority of the text interacts with the musical line. A second objective is to realize how the musico-poetic expression correlates with the composer's comprehension of the Tristan myth.

As pointed to above, Messiaen draws on various materials to illustrate what he regards as the essential idea of the myth. This textual and musical material is then wrapped around the armature of the myth, resembling the procedure of a sculptor, creating a three-dimensional piece of art. (Davidson:9) The manner in which the material is arranged and transformed is vital for the expression of the songs. The analytical chapter is therefore divided into three sections, where each part considers a particular aspect on how his material is treated. Each of these three sections is thus focusing on a distinct characteristic of the expressive quality of the songs.

– The first section examines cross-connections and overall patterns in the textual and musical line, particularly how recurring themes in text and music create an overall coherence. The text generally appears as a mixture of various images, often arranged in illogical juxtapositions, although various recurring images do appear. The musical line, on the other hand, presents a clear structure, particularly by the employment of a structuring theme and a common tonality. The main concern of this part of the analysis is to examine how the composition is structured in terms of musical and textual means, and how these two coincide in order to create an overall coherence.

– *I am a surrealist in my poems, if not in my music* (Gavoty:36), said Messiaen. His statement appears ambiguous, and brings up numerous pertinent questions of how text and music in *Harawi* relate. The surrealist influence on the poems is evident, and Messiaen confirms that he was directly inspired by surrealist art works. The second part of the analysis examines this influence on the songs. It focuses particularly on how the striking imagery of the text affects the coherence of the musical line, while discussing Messiaen's contradictory statement.

– Messiaen's major source of raw material was Inca folklore, providing both melodic material and poetic phrases. A particularly striking aspect of the songs is the way in which onomatopoeic phrases that are derived from the Inca language Quechua, intersperse the French verse. This feature clearly manifests Messiaen's concern for the sonic and rhythmical aspects of language. The final chapter analyzes the employment of onomatopoeic material

derived from Quechua. Sonic or rhythmic qualities of the text will be compared to corresponding musical elements. The way in which music and text create an integrated idiom, as well as how the onomatopoeic passages affect the overall expression of the composition, will be explored.

The main research question of the study then becomes:

- How do the text and music of *Harawi* relate?

Analytically, this general inquiry will be subdivided into three specific questions:

- How does the musical and the textual material interconnect in order to create a unified structure of the composition?
- In what ways does the surrealistic imagery of the text affect the musical expression?
- Are there correlations in terms of sonic and rhythmic qualities between Messiaen's employment of Quechua language and his musical techniques?

1.2. Outline of thesis

The analysis of *Harawi* – presented in chapter 5 – accounts for the main part of the thesis. The preceding chapters look into various aspects seeming relevant for the ensuing analysis:

Chapter 2 outlines Messiaen's vocal output, of which *Harawi* is central. Furthermore, it addresses certain biographical events that formed Messiaen as a vocal composer. Rather than presenting an extensive biographical account, I have decided to dwell on the literary impact that Messiaen's mother, the poet Cécile Sauvage, exerted on him. The chapter will also focus on the historical context of *Harawi*, as it will consider the aesthetic influences of that time, particularly the influence from the Parisian surrealist movement.

Chapter 3 describes central aspects of Messiaen's musical language on the basis of his two treatises, *Technique de mon langage musical* and *Traité de rythme, de couleur et d'ornithologie*. However, a comprehensive account of Messiaen's musical thinking is unfeasible within the limited scope of this thesis, and I address only those aspects of his techniques that are relevant for the ensuing analysis of *Harawi*. The chapter begins by addressing various harmonic aspects, including Messiaen's synesthesia or colour-hearing, his

mental capability of spontaneously associating harmony with colour. Messiaen's birdsong style developed early and characterizes nearly all of his music, including *Harawi*. This element will also be addressed, as well as the basic elements of Messiaen's rhythmic techniques. Finally, the chapter outlines the Peruvian source material employed in *Harawi*.

Chapter 4 looks at different aspects of his textual material. It begins by addressing the original sources, the Celtic myth, as well as Wagner's opera, being a secondary source. Furthermore, it looks into the two main sources of raw material that Messiaen included in his texts, Quechua phrases derived from Inca poetry, and surrealistic art works and poetry. The chapter concludes by outlining the twelve poems chronologically.

The analysis of *Harawi* constitutes chapter 5. Rather than presenting the songs in sequence, the analyses will be organized according to the main characteristic features of the composition. As stated above, the first part deals with overall patterns in the textual and musical line. An examination of how surrealistic elements have influenced the work follows. The final part explores the Peruvian impact on *Harawi*, in particular Messiaen's employment of onomatopoeic language.

The treatise concludes with a summary and discussion of its main findings.

2. Background

2.1. Messiaen as poet-composer

Apart from a large work for orchestra as well as an opera, all of Messiaen's vocal works were composed within the first half of his life. Many of his vocal compositions are scored for soprano and piano, of which the most notable are his song cycles *Poèmes pour Mi*, *Chants de terre et de ciel* and *Harawi*. In light of the fact that language was such a crucial element in nearly all of his music, in form of poetic programmes, the record of his vocal works is relatively small:

1930: *La mort du nombre*, soprano, tenor, violin and piano (1930)

1930: *Trois mélodies*, song cycle (1930)

1935: *Vocalise*, voice and piano (1935)

1936: *Poèmes pour Mi*, song cycle (1936, orchestral version 1937)

1937: *O sacrum convivium!* choral motet (1937)

1938: *Chants de terre et de ciel*, song cycle (1938)

1943: *Trois petites liturgies de la présence divine*, women's voices, pno & Ondes mrt solo, orchestra

1945: *Harawi*: Chants d'amour et de mort, song cycle (1945)

1948: *Cinq rechants*, 12 singers (1948)

1965–69: *La transfiguration de notre seigneur Jésus-Christ*, chorus, soloists and large orchestra

1975–1983: *Saint-François d'Assise*, opera (1975–1983)

Except for religious works based on biblical texts, Messiaen produced his own lyrics to nearly all of his vocal works. This undertaking has obvious advantages, as Edward Cone explains:

...as poet he (the composer) never intended his text to stand independently. He designed it for appropriation, and he probably wrote it with the specific reading in mind that he knew he would later utilize as composer. As a result the poem suffers less from its inevitable transformation than a self-sufficient text does. The gap between the original poem and the composer's reading is minimal, and for this reason some may feel that songs of this kind are the most satisfactory of all (Cone:42).

Poet-composers are rare in music history. A few outstanding exceptions can, however, be mentioned. Richard Wagner's operas are perhaps the foremost example. Debussy also wrote his own texts for some of his songs. Of Messiaen's contemporaries, Arnold Schoenberg and Paul Hindemith wrote their own libretti and Karlheinz Stockhausen, Messiaen's student, employed his own texts for his electronic vocal works. With the exception of Wagner however, none of these composers created their own lyrics to such an extent as Messiaen; yet, for him it seemed the only natural strategy. He showed a strong interest in literature from an early age, and literature influenced his musical thinking to a great extent. In his theoretical treatises we find frequent references to literature and poetry. "He has the greatest sensitivity to the word. He is a literary critic of great astuteness. [...] he made one aware of finesses in the poetry quite apart from the way these poets were used in the music," recalls one of his students, Alexander Goehr (Goehr in Dingle/Simeone:159). Messiaen had a special preference for literature that aroused the imagination and favourably included elements of the macabre. As a child he declared that he "preferred things which made him afraid" (Weller:264), and he frequently mentioned Edgar Allen Poe's poems as influential for him, especially the nightmarish poem *The pit and the pendulum*. (TraitéII:331) This particular fascination shines through in Messiaen's own texts, as will be demonstrated in the analysis of *Harawi*. The same can be said of his fascination for surrealistic literature. He particularly admired the poetry of Pierre Reverdy and Paul Éluard. The latter was renowned for his love poems, and this influence is of particular interest in relation to *Harawi*, yet all of Messiaen's songs show surrealistic traits.

All of his three song cycles have an intimate character, as they are all based on the theme of love. In *Poèmes pour Mi* and *Chants de terre et de ciel*, the text reflects the composer's personal experiences of family life. The first song cycle was dedicated to his wife, the violinist Claire Delbos, nicknamed Mi. The text depicts their loving relationship, yet within a religious context. It conveys a thematic development where the couple undergoes worries and anxieties, but finally reach a joyous climax, depicted here as the divine goal. The second song cycle, *Chant de terre et de ciel*, was written a year after their son Pascal was born. The composition thematizes fatherhood and conveys a domestic intimacy by including nonsense syllables, based on babies' babble, cries and laughter. These are elements that point towards the onomatopoeic text of his next song cycle, *Harawi*.

Messiaen composed *Harawi* with the voice of the mezzosoprano Marcel Bunlet in mind. As his grandest vocal work so far, it was premiered in Paris in 1946 with Bunlet and Messiaen at the piano. The work offers great challenges for the singer, as the composer explains: "*Harawi* demands a brilliant upper register from the singer, the influence of Peruvian folk music led me to ask equally for her to have a warm lower register, powerful and sonorous"¹ (Gol  a:157). The remark illustrates how Messiaen's text was guided by idiomatic concerns and the expressive capabilities of the singer. This is demonstrated by the way his phrases are distributed, and his classical utility of the vocal instrument in lyrical sequences, are clearly influenced by Debussy's vocal score of *Pell  as et M  lisande* and Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*. Messiaen explains how an idiomatic vocal use dictates his vocal writing, not only in the way the text is distributed musically, but also in the actual choice of words: "Singers need open vowels in the low, and above all, the high registers. A high B-flat can only be sung on the sounds "ah," "oh" or "ay" and this phonetic imperative also guides the choice of my words (Samuel:237). One of Messiaen's interpreters, the soprano Jane Manning, relates Messiaen's profound understanding for high voices in particular, with his fascination for birds: "Messiaen's endearing and long-standing affinity with birds and their songs may perhaps provide the key to what seems and astonishing understanding of the female voice, including importantly awareness of the physical feeling of freedom that results from properly energized and supported vocal tone" (Manning in Hill:105).

Messiaen's vocal output culminates with his grand opera, *Saint Fran  ois d'Assise*. The work was an extensive and all-encompassing work, in line with Wagner's idea of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. Obviously, the libretto was the composer's own. Moreover, the score included descriptions of costumes and d  cor, as well as numerous stage directions. It is a curious fact that the opera was Messiaen's only stage work,² inasmuch as his childhood was dominated by a love for theatrical works (Dingle:196). A thread from Messiaen's childhood to his last vocal work can thus be discerned. As a matter of fact, several circumstances of Messiaen's early years prepared the way for his concern for poetry and vocal settings. The next chapter will attend to some of these biographical aspects.

1. "Cependant, si *Harawi* r  clame de la cantatrice un aigu   clatant, l'influence du folklore p  ruvien m'a amen      lui demander   galement un grave chaud, puissant et timbre."

2. *Turanga-l  la* was choreographed as a ballet piece, premiered at the Palais Garnier in 1968 with Messiaen attending the rehearsals. Dingle refers to several additional sketches and proposals of staging Messiaen's works (Dingle:197/198).

2.2. Early influences

It is a curious fact that Messiaen's life span was so well proportioned within the 20th Century, considered in light of his predilection for symmetries in his music. He was born in 1908 in Avignon, and died in Paris in 1992 (Bruhn:10). He was active as composer over an extensive period, writing his first composition as a nine-year-old, while his last work, *Eclairs sur l'au-delà* for orchestra, was premiered after his death. His entire musical oeuvre included more than 70 works, ranging from miniature songs to colossal orchestral works. Despite great stylistic variety, Messiaen's music manifests a truly remarkable and characteristic musical voice throughout, due to an uncompromising trust in his personal musical techniques.

His early compositions were mainly based on religious subjects, and this period generated several organ works, as well as the vocal compositions referred to in the previous chapter. A shorter period followed when he reflected on the topic of human love. This resulted in the Tristan trilogy of which *Harawi* makes up the first part. At the mid-point of his life he started teaching at the Darmstadt summer school. The relationship between Messiaen and a new generation of students engendered a series of experimental works based on serial thinking. Around the same period of time ornithological studies led to several works for piano or orchestra based largely on bird song. In his later years, Messiaen returned to religious themes culminating in his large music drama based on the life of Franz of Assisi.

Apart from the religious visions which were embedded in all of Messiaen's musical activities, there are two particular aspects of his life influencing his music significantly. The first is nature in all its facets; the other is poetry. In his famous conversation with the composer, Goléa points to these distinct threads in his work: "I believe that there are two essential elements of your formative years; an intensely poetic atmosphere, and the views of an extraordinary landscape [...]"³ (Goléa:19). Both of these aspects lead back to the very beginning of his life.

Messiaen was born in Avignon, but at the onset of the First World War when his father was going to the front, his mother took her two children to live in the region of Dauphiné near Grenoble. The magnificent mountains of the French Alps thus form the backdrop of Messiaen's life. He was strongly attached to this mountainous landscape, and throughout his

³ "Je retiens donc deux éléments essentiels dans votre première formation; une atmosphère intensément poétique, et le spectacle d'une nature extrêmement profilée [...]"

life he spent his summers in his chalet in the Dauphiné region.⁴ Numerous works were composed here, and Messiaen's early affection for this grand landscape, not to mention its birds, has found its characteristic expression through his music. His orchestral works often incorporate massive chords illustrating stony landscapes, while splashy passages reflect cascading water falls. The orchestra mirrors dawn choruses of birds, and through virtuoso piano passages one recalls the song of black birds. It was especially the bird life around lake Petichet which inspired some of his largest compositions (Steinitz in Hill:460). *Harawi* shows several traits of this influence as well, encompassing thrilled bird style passages as well as musical renderings of steep, vertiginous mountains.

As a contrast to his fascination for grand landscapes, which generated an "open-air" angle to his music, Messiaen was deeply fascinated by literature, especially the intimate art of poetry. He was sensitive to the minute nuances in language, appreciating the "musicality of words." This special affinity appeared at an early age, and was so marked that the young Messiaen seemed destined for a literary profession. His father was an English teacher and a scholar of Shakespeare. The magical and fantastical dimension of Shakespeare's plays captivated the young Messiaen, and by the age of ten, he had read, and staged in his own miniature theatre, all of Shakespeare's plays. At this age, he received a gift from his teacher of composition: the score of Debussy's opera *Pelleas et Mélisande*. This gift was a decisive event, which steered him towards music. The opera was analyzed in depth in his analysis class at the Conservatory, and throughout his life, this particular opera influenced his musical thinking: "Debussy's music is like water, water is still, unmoving, but immediately you throw a pebble in there is a shock wave around the pebble and motion sets in. Debussy's music is like that. There are stops and all of a sudden, it moves. It was those stops which seized my imagination," (Dingle:10) Debussy's work also met Messiaen's predilections for theatre. In fact, Messiaen considered the story of *Pelleas et Mélisande* as parallel to the Tristan myth, thus it has relevance for a study of *Harawi*.

These were strongly influential moments in the young Messiaen's life. In the context of vocal composing there is, however, another aspect which affected him profoundly; that is the poetic works by his mother, Cécile Sauvage. When Messiaen is asked to present himself in an interview with Goléa, he refers straightaway to his mother's poetry as one of the main guiding forces in his life: "It was my mother who pointed me, before I was born, toward

⁴ In the village of Petichet, near Grenoble.

nature and art”⁵ (Messiaen in Samuel:15). It is obvious that this poetic heritage is of profound importance, and that it affected his attitudes to vocal settings and his undertakings as a poet-composer. The next section will therefore examine more closely this poetic influence.

2.3. Before the beginning

Enigmas of time start before they begin (Griffiths:19).

During the months prior to Olivier Messiaen’s birth on the 10th of December 1908, his mother Cécile Sauvage wrote a collection of poems, entitled *L’âme en Bourgeon*. The collection of twenty poems, all centering on the topic of pregnancy and motherhood, is dedicated to the child she is expecting. Obviously, these poems were highly treasured by Messiaen, and he was deeply captivated by the way she depicts the intimate bonding between mother and child, as here in the ending lines of the 6th poem: ”O you whom fearfully I’ve cosseted in cotton wool / little budding soul attached close to my flower / out of a piece of my heart I fashion yours / O down fruit, moist little mouth” (Weller:202).

In conversation with Antoine Goléa, Messiaen stated that *L’âme en Bourgeon* influenced his character as well as his total destiny (Golea:19). Philip Weller who has translated Sauvage’s poems into English and written a fascinating article about the poems’ influence on Messiaen, says: “All these poetic utterances Messiaen took to be not just vague premonitions or wishful thinking, nor even the result of inspired fantasy or chance prediction, but a kind of active shaping of his destiny. And this unique ‘influence before all influences’ had come to him through the very nature of the bond between them” (Weller:254).

Messiaen mentions several particularly crucial passages in Sauvage’s text. One poem begins with the line: ”O my son! I’ll hold your head between my hands / and say: I’ve shaped this little human world.”⁶ Messiaen points to the fact that Sauvage addressed the poem to a boy without knowing the baby’s gender, and he thus reads them as striking prophecies about his future life. Even his future vocation as a musician are foreseen, according to Messiaen, as in the line: “I suffer from distant music which I cannot ignore”⁷ Moreover, the poem reflects his

⁵ ”C’est ma mère qui m’a conduit, avant ma naissance, vers la nature et l’art.”

⁶ From verse IV, La tête. ”O mon fils, je tiendrai ta tête dans ma main / Je dirai: j’ai pétri ce petit monde humain.” English translation by Phillip Weller.

⁷ Je souffre d’un lointain musique que j’ignore” (ref)

musical preferences, such as combinations of harmonies and colours, as well as his love of music from the Far East: “That radiance upon the window-pane /Where the sun alights and spreads its fan of rays / Here’s all the Orient which sings within my soul / with its blue birds and its butterflies.”⁸ However, what struck Messiaen as the most extraordinary about her “prophecies” was the numerous mentionings of birds, as if “she should have foreseen that one day, after her death, I would become an ornithologist.” He thus read the following line with “a very particular emotion:” “Listen to the lark in the depth of the lost sky.”⁹

On a thematic level, close similarities exist between Messiaen’s and Sauvage’s poetry, despite the fact that Sauvage did not share her son’s religious beliefs. Both mother and son’s attitude to life was all-embracing, including both life and death. The eternal cycles of nature are central themes in Sauvage’s writings, as well as in Messiaen’s music.

Sauvage’s visions and imaginary power had an emotional attraction on Messiaen. He praised the sensitivity and beauty of the poems’ imagery and adopted the expression “attente lyrique” to describe this specific quality. Moreover, he emphasized the musical qualities of the poems; not only the phonetic aspects of diction and rhythm, but also a latent inner music emerging from behind the words (Weller:261):

From her he acquired a nascent feeling for the resources of language in all its aspects: metre and rhythm, imagery, “colour”, metaphor, and for the kind of verbal sensitivity and “ear” that any reader - or indeed any writer, any musician – must have in order that not only the message of poetry but also its sonority and texture, its delicate balance of numbers and densities, its flow of freely distributed accents and rhythmic nuances, shall be at their most potent and effective (Weller: 264-265):

Why then did he never set these poems to music? His first wife Claire Delbos, a violinist and composer, composed several songs to Sauvage’s poems, including excerpts from *L’âme en bourgeois*. When it comes to Messiaen, perhaps he considered them as too precious for musical scoring. *Trois mélodies*, an early set of songs by Messiaen includes, however, one setting of a poem by Sauvage. This song represents thus a unique instance in Messiaen’s vocal production. The song is entitled *Le sourire*, the smile. Sauvage’s poem is short and soft-spoken, yet oozing of sensuality: “Certain mot murmuré / Par vous / est un baiser / Intime et prolongé / Comme un baiser sur l’âme. / Ma bouche veut sourire et mon sourire

⁸ “Ce carré de clarté là-bas, c’est la fenêtre / où le soleil assied son globe de rayons / Voici tout l’Orient qui chante dans mon être / Avec ses oiseaux bleus, avec ses papillons.” (poem VI)

⁹ Écoute l’alouette au fond du ciel perdue [...]” (Weller:254)

tremble.”¹⁰ With this early miniature song Messiaen gives a foretaste of the great love songs to come.

2.4. Paris in the 1930s – the burgeoning composer

Messiaen enrolled at the Conservatory in 1920, and during his years as a student his techniques and artistic preferences matured. His teacher of music history, Maurice Emmanuel, acquainted him with the metres of Greek poetry. He was taught organ improvisation by Marcel Dupré, and he started at an early age to explore timbres of the orchestra, thanks to his teacher of orchestration, Paul Dukas. This is also when Messiaen became aware of the musical treasury of birdsong. Dukas encouraged his students to listen to the birds, an advice that Messiaen lived by throughout his compositional career.

Messiaen took his last exams in 1929, and formally left the Conservatory in 1930 to embark on his future life as a composer. At this time, Parisian musical life was exceedingly multifaceted: neo-classicism, Stravinsky and the Ballets Russes, the composer's group *Les six*, Dada, surrealism, jazz and cabaret music. Visiting composers from Latin-America or Russia influenced French music, and the city's large cathedrals were concert venues for magnificent organ music.

2.5. Messiaen and the Surrealist movement

Despite great diversity in trends and ideas, the artistic movement surrealism predominates Parisian art life during the Inter-war years. Messiaen was obviously drawn towards their ideas and artistic expression, yet to explain his association with surrealism is not a straightforward undertaking. His attitude towards their project shows great ambiguity, and he alternately admired and distanced himself from their ideas. However, surrealism was a vital source of inspiration, and as well as being fascinated by their art, poetry and painting, Messiaen studied the writings of the movement's founder, the author André Breton with great interest.

10 "Some whispered words / by you / is a kiss / intimate and long-lasting / My mouth will smile / and my smile tremble."

The backstory of surrealism began with the rebellious movement of artists that took the name Dada. This movement was established by artists who had taken refuge in Zurich during the First World War. The experience of a meaningless war was the seed of their revolt, and they blamed a society based on rationality and logic for the cruelties of the war. The Dadaists defended an anti-attitude characterized by political, moral and artistic nihilism. Their art expression included absurd elements and scandal became their distinctive mark. While the Dada movement led their main activities in Switzerland, the Surrealists became established in Paris led by Breton. Artists belonging to Dada felt in need of a more positive ideal, and thus the surrealist project developed, emphasizing a vital creativity. The surrealists rejected the opposition between dream and reality brought about by the conventions of society. From this ideal and based on Breton's credo, a novel approach to art evolved: "I believe in the future resolution of these two states, dream and reality, which are seemingly so contradictory, into a kind of absolute reality, a surreality, if one may so speak"¹¹ (Breton:14). The artificial split between logic and feeling, body and soul, and between work and freedom was abandoned, and the surrealists considered the division between the artist and his or her art work as artificial. Hence, the mind of the artist was considered raw material for their own art. This idea found support in the writings of influential contemporary thinkers, first of all the psychiatrist Sigmund Freud. His groundbreaking theories of the unconscious and the development of the psycho-analytical method, had an enormous influence on surrealism, as well as the general European art life in early 20th Century: "Psychoanalysis was confirming the intuitions of the romantic tradition of self expression and inspiration by revealing the psyche as an exhaustible supply of wonders. To the surrealists these wonders were more real, more surreal than rational thought can be (Sandrow:40).

The philosopher Henri Bergson who lectured in Paris at that time, was highly esteemed by the surrealists, as well as by Messiaen. Bergson valued intuition above intellect and proposed ideas of how time and space are intimately connected: "There is a real space, without duration, in which phenomena appear and disappear simultaneously with our states of consciousness." (Bergson in Dingle:167) His ideas of altered consciousness of time corresponded well with surrealist thinking. Messiaen related Bergson's theories to his own ideas of rhythm and temporality in music. The two categories of real time and duration

¹¹ Je crois à la résolution future de ces deux états, en apparence si contradictoires, que sont la rêve et la réalité absolue, de surreauté, si l'on peut ainsi dire"

(durée); the first being structured and objective time, while the second being the subjective experience of time, were of particular relevance to his rhythmic thinking.

The novelist Marcel Proust presented similar ideas, yet in fictional form. His novel *Remembrance of things past* was published in the 1920s. It revolved around parallel ideas to those advocated by Freud and Bergson, the mysterious realms of the subconscious and the relativity of time. Overall, these groundbreaking scientific and philosophical ideas found a powerful expression through surrealist writing and painting.

Above all, Messiaen was drawn to surrealist poetry. He admired particularly the poet Paul Éluard whose love poems had an indirect influence on the text of *Harawi*. Pierre Reverdy was another surrealist writer Messiaen read with interest. Reverdy founded the influential surrealist journal *Nord-Sud*, and both Éluard and Reverdy were considered co-founders of surrealism. In addition, the striking motives of surrealist painting inspired Messiaen, as will be seen in the case of *Harawi*.

Messiaen was strongly affected by Surrealism, but was he a Surrealist composer? In a discussion between the former Surrealist Ernest de Gengenbach and Messiaen, the former says: “If I had to define Messiaen, I would not hesitate to say that Olivier Messiaen is the Surreal in music. Up to now there have been Surrealist poets, painters and sculptors, but as yet no Surrealist composer. Through your music, you respond to a cherished wish of the surrealists: the element of the fantastic [‘merveilleux’], and you grant their urgent desire, their longing for a sense of being disconcerted by unfamiliarity [‘depaysement’]”¹² (Gengenbach in Hill:167). Messiaen consented to the description, yet he avoided the term surrealist in favour of the term supernatural: “There are three categories of style – the real, the surreal, and the supernatural (surnaturel), and I think I have passed these others and have obtained the supernatural (Davidson:7). There is no doubt, however, that his general aesthetic outlook was influenced by surrealist thinking, as he idealized the marvellous and mysterious imagery of dreams. “If you define Surrealism as a mental vantage-point where visible natural realities and invisible supernatural realities are no longer in opposition to each other and where they cease to be perceived as contradictions, then I am a surrealist composer,” he explains.

¹² Gengenbach’s article *Messiaen ou le surréel en musique* was published in 1946 in *Revue musicale de France*.

What then are the correspondences between surrealism and music? The composer who identifies most readily with the surrealists, Eric Satie, utilized surrealistic means in his titles and score instructions and composed music for surrealistic plays and performances. Composers of the group Les Six; Poulenc, Tailleferre and Milhaud, also provided music for surrealist soirées. However, there existed no genuine link between surrealistic ideals and a musical expression, and surrealism did not influence composers' procedures in significant ways. "The surrealistic concepts of rationality and irrationality are adjectives which are difficult to apply to music," says Sandrow. She argues further for the disconnection between surrealism and music: "Perhaps music was prevented from conveying the artist's transformation from imitator to creator by the fact that it is a self-contained universe which does not at all refer to its environment, and because it is purely sensory" (Sandrow:53). An additional reason for the weak connection between surrealism and music may be that the technical demands on the performer and the non-improvisatory nature of musical performance, were incompatible with surrealistic ideals. This may explain Messiaen's ambivalent relationship with the group. Besides, Messiaen could never sympathize with the collective aspect of surrealism, and he never identified with surrealism as a community.

As a composer, Messiaen advocated an aesthetic vision that was far more complex and personal than the music that associates with surrealism. His faith seemed more important as a guide for his music than surrealistic ideals. Messiaen's argument illustrates this point clearly: "The disciples of André Breton [...] wanted passionately to have on earth a state of the beyond. It did not occur to them to have that through faith. In a present eternity, I glimpse infinite life unbound by Time and Space" (Messiaen in Hill:167). In *Harawi*, however, Messiaen appears as a genuine surrealist, as the idea of transcendent, divine love blends with surrealistic images. We shall examine the surrealistic elements in his musical language more closely in the chapter of the analysis.

2.6. Le Jeune France

The Surrealist writers and artists coexisted with a circle of composers, and at the time when Surrealism developed, Parisian musical life was predominated by a current of neo-classicism. "The function of art is to seize the spirit of the age," proclaimed the leading figure of the

movement, Jean Cocteau (Cocteau in Dingle:3). Music should reflect its times and the prevailing surroundings; industry, machinery and modern city life. The antithesis of their ideal was music that involved love and mysticism, thus the music of Wagner and Debussy were held in contempt. By the mid-thirties these ideas became the new musical establishment in Paris. However, the coolness and distance of view affected by the neo-classicists were challenged by a small group of composers called “le Jeune France.” The group was initiated by the composer Yves Baudrier and included four members, Messiaen, Baudrier, André Jolivet, and Jean-Yves Daniel-Lesur. However, Messiaen’s engagement with the group was limited; polemical activities were not among his priorities, and as the Second World war broke out, the group’s existence came to an end. It is nevertheless within the context of this group that Messiaen’s aesthetic ideas find expression. This is reflected in the opening lines of the group’s manifesto: “As the conditions of life become more and more hard, mechanical and impersonal, music must relentlessly bring its spiritual violence and its generous reactions to those who love it” (Broad in Dingle & Simeone:3). In particular, Messiaen’s innovative ideas of rhythms clashed with the neo-classicist ideal: “He sees rhythmic blandness as the most obvious indication of the artistic paucity of neo-classicism on the one hand and rhythmic innovation as the key to a new age of musical expression on the other” (Broad in Dingle & Simeone:5). The ideas that Messiaen expressed, shows a composer who sought to develop a musical language of a unique and personal quality. The techniques he developed on the basis of his aesthetic visions, will be outlined in the next chapter.

3. The charm of impossibilities - Messiaen's musical techniques

I always thought a technical process had all the more power when it came up, in its very essence, against an insuperable obstacle (Messiaen in Samuel:47).

Although the twelve *Harawi* songs have a flavour of exoticism, the composition unmistakably bears Messiaen's musical signature, due to the composer's consequent use of well-defined techniques. These were comprehensively outlined in his own theoretical treatises. The first of these, *Technique de mon langage musicale*, was published in 1944¹³ and intended as a textbook for his students at the Conservatory. The second, *Traité de rythme, de couleur et d'ornithologie*, was a collection of seven volumes spanning over 3000 pages.¹⁴ This massive work was written in the years between 1949-1992. It was published posthumously and appears as a vast artistic testimony. The treatise includes thorough descriptions and analyses of Messiaen's own, as well as other composers' works. It also encompasses presentations of the vast material which Messiaen utilized in his own music. By covering a multitude of topics based on the composers' comprehensive studies of literature, philosophy and religion, it lays out the fundamentals of his musical thought processes.

Messiaen tended to develop his techniques from certain basic ideas. A case in point is how the expression "charmes des impossibilités" ("the charm of impossibilities") encapsulates central compositional techniques and reflects his fascination for everything magic. In the opening chapter of *Technique* he explains how "this charm, at once voluptuous and contemplative, resides particularly in certain mathematical impossibilities, particularly in the modal and rhythmic domains" (Messiaen1956:13). This vital idea of the impossible's charm, is evident in the symmetrical arrangements in his music. Messiaen was deeply fascinated by symmetrical patterns of all kinds, and he equated this aspect of his techniques with the perfect symmetry in nature, exemplified by the veins of leaves, butterflies' wings, or the human face and body (Messiaen1958:12). A symmetrical pattern is a locked unit, impossible to reverse without ending up with the very same pattern. This following outline of Messiaen's

¹³ *Technique de mon langage musical* was translated to English in 1956 (Leduc). I refer exclusively to the English translation.

¹⁴ For simplicity reasons, Messiaen's treatises will be referred to as *Technique* and *Traité* in the following chapters.

techniques, illustrates how this concept was a key factor in various dimensions of his music, not least the modes, which form the basis of his harmonic language.


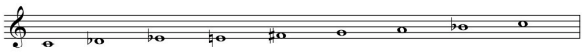

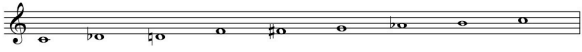
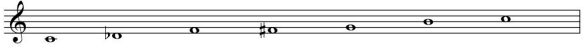
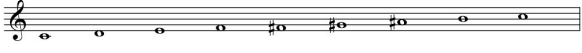
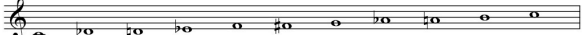
3.1. Modes

Alongside composers who developed atonal and 12-tone music, Messiaen approached the problem of tonality by developing a unique modal system, a set of seven scales. These are utilized extensively in his music, and they are constructed so as to preserve a sense of tonality, as well as extending into modality. They have a limited number of possible transpositions, and Messiaen linked their "strange charm" with their impossibility of transposition (Messiaen 1956:58). The modal aspect of Messiaen's musical language clearly connects him with the French musical tradition. Since the middle of the 19th Century, French composers have explored modi unrelated to the traditional, Western diatonic system. Improvisations on Greek modes were part of the musical composition curriculum at the Paris Conservatory, and composers explored non-Western modes, such as Chinese pentatonism. By adopting non-diatonic modes, a static and timeless character was created, and the sheer sound quality prevailed over harmonic progression. Fauré, Satie, Ravel and Debussy were all composers who utilized modality in their music. Messiaen developed his use of modality further, by rigorously studying the modal systems of Indian, Chinese and Greek music.

Although Messiaen's seven modes create a characteristic stamp on his music, they are not entirely his own invention. Mode 1 is identical with the whole tone scale. According to Messiaen, this mode was already utilized to perfection by Debussy, and he therefore rarely employs it in his own music. Mode 2 is known as the octatonic scale and can be found in the music of Rimsky-Korsakov and Stravinsky. This was also Messiaen's preferred mode, and it is recognized as the central mode of *Harawi*.

The seven modes derive from the twelve steps of the chromatic scale by dividing the full scale into equal groups: three groups of four notes, four groups of three notes, six groups of two notes or two groups of six notes. Since the groups correspond, identical pitch material will return after 2, 3, 4 or 6 transpositions. This explains their designation, as all the scales have a limited number of possible transpositions (see figure 1):

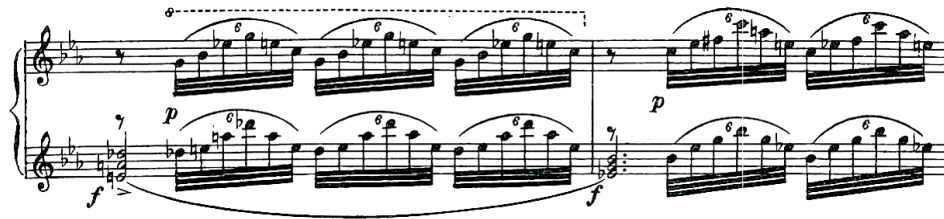
Figure 1: Messiaen's modes of limited transpositions:

Mode 1 – whole thone scale, 2 transpositions:	
Mode 2 – 3 groups of $\frac{1}{2} + 1$ step, 3 transpositions:	
Mode 3 – 3 groups of $1 + \frac{1}{2} + 1$ step, 4 transpositions:	
Mode 4 – 2 groups of $\frac{1}{2} + 1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ step, 6 transpositions:	
Mode 5 – 2 groups of $\frac{1}{2} + 2 + \frac{1}{2}$ step, 6 transpositions:	
Mode 6 – 2 groups of $1 + 1 + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2}$ step, 6 transpositions:	
Mode 7 – 2 groups $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{2} + 1 + \frac{1}{2}$ step, 6 transpositions:	

Both modal and tonal harmonies can be extracted from the modes, a potential which Messiaen utilized to the fullest. Tonal elements were included in the modal atmosphere, and minor and major triads were central to his harmonic language. Through the use of modes, Messiaen was able to juggle with different tonalities without defining a tonal centre of the music: "They are at once in the atmosphere of several tonalities at once, *without polytonality*, the composer being free to give predominance to one of the tonalities or to leave the tonal impression unsettled." (Messiaen 1956:58) With mode 2¹ as example,¹⁵ we shall look at how tonal effects were utilized. Four major tonalities can be extracted from this mode: *C*, *E^b*, *F[#]* and *A*, as well as two minor chords, *C* and *A* minor. In addition, dominant seventh chords can be built on all four major chords. The passage shown in figure 2 is derived from movement 2 of *Harawi*, and exemplifies how Messiaen creates sparkling sounding passages by utilizing major and minor triads, all within the pitch limitations of one mode.

¹⁵ The transposition of a mode is indicated in superscript, i.e. 2¹, second mode in first transposition.

Figure 2: *Harawi*, mov. 2, piano part, bar 3-4:



Modulations between different transpositions within the same mode, or between different modes, create subtle shifts in harmonic colour. This is demonstrated in movement 9 of *Harawi*, where a chordal sequence move through different transpositions of mode 2 in the upper line, while the lower line presents a tonal chord progression (see chapter 5.2.4). Polymodality, the superposition of several modes, occurs frequently in Messiaen's music, and this can also be found in *Harawi*. In the instrumental interlude of the final song, the chords of the upper layer are extracted from mode 6⁴, while those of the lower layer belong to mode 4⁵ (see chapter 5.2.5). Messiaen's use of modes will be exemplified further in the analyses of chapter 5.

3.2. Chords

Messiaen's employment of modes was clearly explained in *Technique*. To get a grasp of his vast repertoire of chords is, however, more difficult. His chords are varied and complex, representing a wide range of timbres and colours. They are frequently constructed from the pitch selection of a mode. However, Messiaen develops his chords far beyond the sonic potential of the modes:

My harmonic language doesn't include only modes. In addition, and above all, I use chords: the chords of contracted resonance, the revolving chords, chords of total chromaticism, chords of transposed inversions on the same bass note, and thousands of chords invented to reproduce the timbres of bird songs. Whereas the modes have overall colors corresponding to their various transpositions [...] the chords all have twelve colors corresponding to the twelve possible transpositions." (Messiaen in Samuel:64)

Although Messiaen's chords are complex, he explains their designation as based on simple principles. In his early years, influenced by Debussy's tonal language, he was concerned with

the natural harmonics of the overtone series. The added sixth and the augmented fourth are commonly included in his chords. Messiaen argues that they can be derived back to the resonance series and therefore be considered natural: “In the resonance of a low C, a very fine ear perceives an F[#]” (Messiaen 1956:47). He suggests therefore that there exists a harmonic tension between these two notes: “There will be an attraction between the F sharp and the C, the former tending to resolve itself upon the latter.” (ibid.) However, in Messiaen’s harmonic language, added notes have primarily the function of colouring the musical line: “These notes keep a character of intrusion, of supplement: the bee in the flower!” (ibid.)

Messiaen’s harmonic language features a broad variety of chords. In *Technique*, he divides his common chord structures into four categories:

The chord on the dominant. This chord has no dominant function. It contains all the notes of the major scale and is built on the fifth of the major scale, therefore its name. Messiaen colours this chord in a variety of ways by simply adding appoggiaturas to the original chord. Figure 3 shows a sequence of varying dispositions of the chord, derived from the opening of movement 8 in *Harawi*:

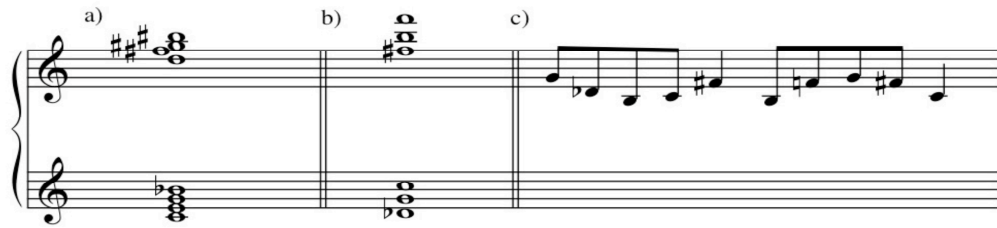
Figure 3: The chord of the dominant. Chordal sequence from “Syllabes.”



Chord of resonance. The chord of resonance is based on the odd numbers of the overtone row: 1, 3, 5 ... 15. The chord can also be traced back to mode 3¹, including all of the scales’ notes, except E^b (see fig. 4a).

Chord in fourths. The chord contains all the notes of the fifth mode and is totally symmetrical, built up of perfect and augmented fourths (fig. 4b). In addition, Messiaen relates the chord to one of his common melodic formulas (fig. 4c). Both the chord of resonance and the chord in fourths exemplify how Messiaen’s harmonic and modal thinking coincides.

Figure 4 a) chord of resonance, b) chord in fourths, c) melodic formula derived from the chord in fourths.



Effects of resonance: Particularly noticable in his piano scores, Messiaen enlarged the sonic register by utilizing a wide tessitura, ranging from cluster sounds in the bass to finely spun passages in the treble. Chordal arrangements described as *effects of resonance* utilize both low-pitched and treble sonorities. A forte bass chord underlying softer treble chords, is described as a superior resonance, while the inverted effect is described as an inferior resonance. Various combinations of these, often including birdstyle ornaments as treble sonorities, added new colours to the chordal arrangements. The example below is derived from the early piano preludes, but *Harawi* contains similar arrangements, often including birdstyle motifs.

Figure 5: *Cloches d'angoisse et larmes d'adieu*, bar 4-5.



Messiaen's early record of chords does not cover his rich and continuously evolving harmonic language. Above all, his capability of associating colour and sound was intimately related to his harmonic language, vitally affecting the ways in which his chordal repertoire developed.

3.3. Colours

"When I hear music – and it was already like that when I was a child – I see colours. Chords are expressed in terms of colours for me – for example a yellowish orange with a reddish tinge. I'm convinced that one can convey this to the listening public" (Messiaen in Bernard:203). Messiaen's colour hearing is an essential aspect of any investigation into his music. In Messiaen's own musical analyses, whether of his own or other's music, his colour hearing was of vital importance: "[...] he persisted in enumerating the colours of his compositions in the same way that he described their formal structure, their harmonic, contrapuntal and rhythmic components [...] as if the colours were possessed of the same objective "truth" as are the other aspects of his music" (Bernard:203). The ability to experience colours when hearing music has been explained as synesthesia, a neurological condition where the afflicted person is unable to differentiate between different sense impressions. The combination of sound and colour, as in Messiaen's case, is one form of synesthesia, but it may also include other senses such as smell, vision, touch or taste. It was not single tones or keys that caused Messiaen to experience colours; his synesthetic reactions were related to complex chords, and these chords evoked rich colour complexes. He could also experience colours simply from reading a score, and this capability played a major role in his compositional work, offering him an additional creative tool that he could actively use. In his article on Messiaen's colour hearing Jonathan W. Bernard points to Messiaen's highly conscious use of this very special faculty in his compositional work: "Messiaen was obviously no musical naïf, simply reacting to whatever sounds happen to come along; the ability to control the colours plays an integral role in his compositional technique" (Bernard:206). Consequently, the colour aspect of Messiaen's music, greatly challenged performers of his music, an aspect commented on by Yvonne Loriod, the leading interpreter of his piano works: "[...] the balance of chords is very important because if this is wrong the whole colour will change" (Loriod in Hill:287).

Messiaen devotes several chapters of *Traité* on the relationship between colour and harmonic timbre. All transpositions of his modes, as well as a large number of chord structures, are given exact colour descriptions. He explains how a mode changes its colours entirely with each transposition. The three transpositions of mode 2 correspond therefore to three totally different colour complexes. When the mode is transposed an octave upward, it takes on a brighter colour shade; transposed downward, the colour darkens. For Messiaen, the

experience of colours is primarily connected to pitches and tone complexes, although additional elements as rhythms or timbre, may alter the colour perception.

Most of us who listens to Messiaen's music, are unable to perceive its inherent colours. What kind of significance the colour aspect has for the listening experience, is therefore a pertinent question. Although his experience of colour was totally subjective, Messiaen believed this could be communicated to his audience, and became truly regretful from knowing that his audience could not share his experiences: "[One of the great dramas of my life] consists of my telling people that I see colours whenever I hear music, and they see nothing, nothing at all. That's terrible. And they don't even believe me" (Messiaen in Bernhard:203).

3.4. Bird song

Listen to the birds. They are great masters. (Paul Dukas in Messiaen1956: 34).

Messiaen was encouraged to listen to birdsong by his teacher of composition, Paul Dukas, and this advice was painstakingly followed. Throughout his compositional career he notated and recorded bird song with the aim of incorporating it into his music. This element was simply referred to as "bird style," and it characterizes nearly all of his music. Birdsong motifs occur for the first time in *La nativité du Seigneur* from 1935, yet they were not utilized systematically until the *Quator pour la fin du temps* in 1941. From then on, his methods of transcribing birdsong to music developed further, culminating in three large compositions of the 1950s, *Réveil des Oiseaux*, *Oiseaux exotiques* and *Catalogue d'oiseaux*.

Messiaen's approach was meticulous and detailed, comparable to that of a scientist. He was "far more conscientious an ornithologist than any earlier musician, and far more musical an observer than any other ornithologist" (Griffiths:168). As Messiaen points out, accurate transcriptions of birdsong are impossible to render exactly by human musical means. The fast tempos, high pitches and small intervals of birdsong cannot be replicated on musical instruments. Consequently, the original tempos have slowed down, registers have moved two or three octaves lower and microtones have been avoided by expanding the intervals: "Everything is enlarged, but the relationships stay the same, so that my version is still exact. It is the transposition of what I have heard on to a more human scale" (Messiaen in Griffiths:170).

Messiaen brought his own musical tastes into the way he recorded and reproduced the material. The bird song entered into his musical world: "Of course, I am the one who is listening, and involuntarily I introduce something of my manner, of my way of hearing and reproducing the songs" (Messiaen in Griffiths:172). Cells of fourths, fifths and tritones predominate his bird passages, yet these intervals were general characteristics in Messiaen's early style. The first instance of bird style in *Harawi* shows no reproduction of a single species, but a *mélange* of different types. Messiaen speaks of them as "un oiseau idéal unique" (TraitéIII:283). Figure 6 shows extracts from this movement, and these motifs are reminiscent of blackbird song (TraitéIII:283).

Figure 6: Motives from movement 2. *Harawi*:



In further movements of *Harawi* the birds are specified. Movement 4 presents characteristic transcriptions of thrush song, while the distinct bird style motifs in movement 10, combines transcriptions of the song of chaffinch and blackbird. In this movement, the bird is also referred to in the lyrics as a symbolic idea, the bird as a messenger between earth and heaven. The birds have musical, as well as symbolic significance in Messiaen's music.

3.5. Rhythm

Let us not forget that the first, essential element in music is Rhythm, and that rhythm is first and foremost the change of number and duration. (Messiaen1958:11)

The rhythmic aspect of Messiaen's music became increasingly more important throughout his musical career, and he offers a substantial part of *Traité* to his rhythmic techniques. By his developments in this domain, he was taking important steps towards serialism, and the metricity of traditional Western music was significantly challenged by Messiaen's innovative ideas: "Schematically, rhythmic music is music that scorns repetition, squareness and equal

divisions, and that is inspired by the movement of nature, movements of free and unequal durations” (Messiaen in Samuel:67). Messiaen’s point of departure was a single, short rhythmic value, which he could multiply freely, and this approach liberated him from the constraints of regularity and pulse. Accordingly, he based his rhythmic techniques on Ancient Greek prosody, the neumes of plainchant or the rhythmic systems of the Hindu tradition.

Messiaen’s rhythms are based on the idea of concealing the regularity of the pulse. Prime numbers, 5, 7, 11, 13, etc. were used extensively. He also created irregularities in the rhythmic pulse by adding a simple note value, whether as note, rest or dot, to a rhythmic motif (see figure 7):

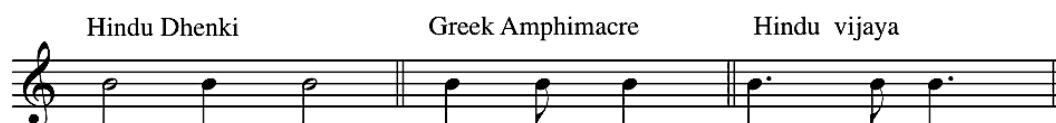
Figure 7:



The technique of augmenting or diminishing note values is an established compositional procedure, which is utilized extensively by various composers. When Messiaen utilizes this principle, he goes further than simply doubling or dividing the value by two. Any note value can be added or subtracted to the original value, and thereby a number of variations on a rhythmic motive can occur.

When two rhythmic motives mirrors each other around a central note value, a closed unit appears. Messiaen describes this as a nonretrogradable rhythm. The Hindu rhythms ”dhenkī,” and ”vijaya,” as well as the Greek ”amphimacre,” are basic examples of this symmetric principle:

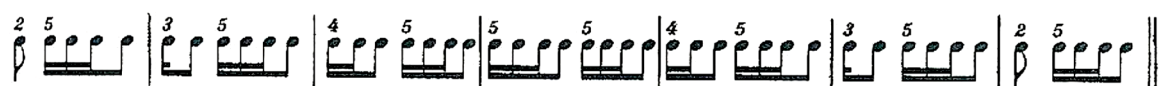
Figure 8:



Messiaen develops this basic idea. In the seventh movement of *Harawi*, non-retrogradable rhythms are combined and arranged in a three-part canon. In the last movement of *Vingt regards* a non-retrogradable rhythm is continuously expanding, and this creates a dramatically evolving sequence.

Messiaen was strongly influenced by Stravinsky's *Le sacre du printemps*, assigning it "magical powers," and in Stravinsky's music he discovered several rhythmical innovations. The principle of "rhythmic characters" was utilized in his own music. Messiaen describes the idea by imagining a theatre stage with three characters: "[...] the first one acts, behaving in a brutal manner by striking the second; the second character is acted upon, his actions dominated by those of the first; finally, the third character is simply present at the conflict and remains inactive" (Messiaen in Samuel:71). Applied to the rhythmic field, this threefold image corresponds to three rhythmic groups. Increasing note values correspond to the attacking character, decreasing note values the attacked character, while the unchanged note values reflects the unmoved character. The three rhythmic elements can be recognized in the mid-section in *Harawi*'s 8th song,¹⁶ where they form the rhythmic pattern, which is schematized in fig. 9:

Figure 9:



After his contact with the Darmstadt school, Messiaen developed his rhythmic techniques. The serial techniques that were, by previous composers, used in connection with pitch, were now utilized in the domain of durations. These included techniques of permutations. The simplest form of permutation is the serie 1–2–3, and this series can be permuted in the following way: 1–2–3, 1–3–2, 2–1–3, 2–3–1, 3–1–2, 3–2–1. Messiaen utilizes the principle of permutation in the textual arrangement of *Harawi*, a feature that will be addressed in chapter 5.3.2.

¹⁶ See also chapter 5.4.4.

Messiaen's explorations in the rhythmic area were unceasing, and these examples show only a small part of his extensive techniques. His rhythmic techniques were closely connected with his philosophical ideas of time. In the text-music analyses in chapter 5, we shall look specifically at how he utilized his rhythmic techniques in order to reflect the time aspect of the Tristan myth. However, Messiaen employed various means apart from rhythm to alter our perception of time. One of these is his use of elements derived from non-Western folk music. The next section addresses the Peruvian music, which were employed in *Harawi*.

3.6. Peruvian music

Folk music from different parts of the world attracted Messiaen, especially in the early stage of his compositional career when the melodic element of his music was particularly strong. The pentatonic melodies of Chinese and Inca music, Indian ragas, Hungarian and Russian folk songs, as well as Middle Age French troubadours were all captivating him and considered useful material for his own music. Accordingly, he devotes a chapter in *Traité* on folkloristic source material.

Messiaen's ability to incorporate foreign musical material into his own musical language, is clearly demonstrated through the *Harawi* songs. Here, the influence of Inca folklore is significant. Although Inca elements affect both music and text, it was the characteristic melodies of the ancient Inca culture, which attracted Messiaen in particular, claiming that they were the most beautiful folk melodies in the world (Goléa:149).¹⁷ This is an interesting claim, in view of the fact that Messiaen neither travelled to Peru, nor actually heard Peruvian folk music. Unlike Bartók's undertakings in collecting Hungarian folk music, Messiaen's source of material on Peruvian folklore was exclusively literal, and he was deeply influenced by a book on Peruvian folklore by the ethnologists Raoul and Margerite d'Harcourt. The book was entitled *La musique des Incas* and was published in 1925. The d'Harcourts had studied folklore from the Inca empire which included Peru, Bolivia and Equador, and their book included myths and poetry, as well as a vast collection of notated folk songs and dances. Melodies, rhythms, as well as the text of *Harawi*, can be traced back to this source. However, Messiaen employed this material in his own genuine manner. In conversation with

¹⁷ [...] je me suis passionné pour la musique péruvienne qui contient, je pense, les plus belles mélodies folkloriques du monde." (Goléa:149).

Antoine Goléa, he is confronted with the way he employs the original material. He answers by distinguishing between two ways of using folklore in music: (1) by arranging folk melodies in an imitative way, or (2) by creating a folkloristic atmosphere by using the folk-style's modes or rhythms. According to Messiaen, he didn't follow any of these methods. His approach was rather that of borrowing Peruvian themes, which he then transformed, by way of adapting them to his own modes of limited transpositions and to his rhythmic techniques (Goléa:149).

What then distinguishes the traditional music of the Inca culture that captivated Messiaen so strongly? Its most characteristic trait was modality; Inca music was originally based on pentatonic scales. The early music based on pure pentatonism, was described by the d'Harcourts as Indian monody, *la monodie indienne*. Messiaen preferred the early authentic modes, of which the scale a-c-d-e-g was the most frequently used (TraitéVII:66). After the Spanish conquest of the Inca empire in the 16th Century, the pentatonic modes became modified by elements of Greek modes, minor modes and chromaticism, resulting in so-called mixed modes, *echelles métissées*.

Characteristic instrumentation of early, pre-Colombian music was wind instruments: horns, various flutes, such as quenás, syrinx and pan-pipes. These were accompanied by percussion instruments: drums, marimbas and different sort of bells. With the European influence, new instruments appeared and developed, first of all string instruments, like different kind of harps, guitar or mandolin-type of instruments. A-capella song, performed by groups of women in non-vibrato, high-pitch voices, is also characteristic of Andean music.

In Messiaen's *Harawi*, both folk dances and songs from the Inca tradition, have been employed. The dances categorize as either *Wayño* (huayno), a couple dance, or *Kaswa* (kashua), a ritual group dance. The dances were performed in connection with ritualistic celebrations and festivals, related to religion, hunting, or harvest. They are often in duple meter, 2/4 or 6/8 measure, commonly in syncopated rhythmic patterns similar to the American cake-walk or the Argentinean tango (see fig. 10):

Figure 10: Characteristic Kaswa rhythms



The folk songs can be classified in different genres according to their subject, including for example pastoral songs, funeral songs or farewell songs. The *Yaraví* (Spanish) was a melancholic song treating the theme of tragic love. In Quechua this genre was denoted *Harawi*, and this provided the main title for Messiaen's songs. The *Yaravies* were slow and stately songs from the region of Arequipa, in the south of Peru, a mountain area with volcanoes and deep canyons, and they expressed the melancholy and sadness of Indian farmers surviving in the harsh climate of the Andean mountains. The songs were in triple meter, they were sung a-capella by a group of women. A guitar prelude and interludes were usually added, and normally they were followed by the more joyful Wayno dance.

The employment of Peruvian melodies and dances create a distinct folkloristic atmosphere in Messiaen's composition, although authentic modes and rhythms are adapted to the composer's own musical language. Textual elements derived from Andean mythology and poetry adds further to the work's exotic expression. This will be described in the next chapter, which examines various influences on *Harawi's* text.

4. The text of *Harawi*

4.1. Influential sources

The tragic legend of Tristan and Isolde's fatal relationship was one of the most influential romances of the medieval period. The myth is of Celtic origin and can be traced back to Ireland, Cornwall and Brittany of the 5th Century. In the medieval literature the eldest traditions of the legend that we know of is an early version by the Anglo-French 12th Century poet Thomas, together with a coexistent French version by Bérout. A later version by the German author Gottfried von Strassburg became the source of Richard Wagner's music drama. Finally, the 19th Century French author Joseph Bédier reconstructed Thomas' version,¹⁸ and this was a version that Messiaen was partly drawing on. However, despite various renditions of the story, the overall plot remains unchanged:¹⁹

The young Cornish knight Tristan has defeated the Irish King Moholt. His uncle, King Marke of Cornwall, wishes to marry the young Irish lady Isolde, and Tristan accompanies her on the voyage from Ireland to Cornwall. On the boat Tristan and Isolde accidentally drinks of a magical love potion that has been prepared for Isolde and King Marke on their wedding night. The elixir promises strong attraction between those who tastes it, and Tristan and Isolde fall deeply in love. Returning to Cornwall, Isolde marries King Marke, but the impact of the love potion forces her to meet Tristan secretly. Eventually, the King discovers them, and Tristan is forced to leave the country. He sails to Brittany, and eventually marries Isolde of the white hands. However, Tristan falls mortally ill. Since he is unable to forget Isolde of Cornwall, he agrees with his friend Kurwenal to bring her to Brittany. When he returns, a white sail will signal that Isolde is with him, a black sail tells him that she is not. Tristan's jealous wife lies to Tristan, as she tells him that the sails of the returning boat are black. Tristan dies of grief, and as Isolde arrives and discovers Tristan dead, she dies by the sight of her dead lover. Some sources tell that two trees grow from behind each grave, and that their branches intertwine, unable to separate.

This tragic legend fascinated Messiaen immensely. He described the story as “the symbol of all great loves and for all the great love poems in literature or in music” (Messiaen in

¹⁸ Besides, the Tristan myth is also associated with the English Arthurian legends. A second tradition adapts the original myth to a prose romance entitled the *Prose Tristan*. This version influenced in turn the English 14th Century author Sir Thomas Malory¹⁸.

¹⁹ The summary is based on Strassburg's version.

Samuel:30), and composed a triptych of works over this mythical theme. The trilogy was intended as “a grand *Tristan and Isolde* in three acts” (Messiaen in Goléa:154), where each composition represented one third of a larger, dramatic structure. The first part, *Harawi*, presents the conflict inherent in the love-death topic. The ten-movement *Turangalila symphony* represents the cosmic aspect of the love story, illustrated by moments of intense and ecstatic expressivity. Finally, *Cinq rechants* concludes the trilogy by introducing a religious dimension to the love-death subject through its focus on time and eternity. Through all three works his main project was to deepen and explore the essential idea of the Tristan story, and he seems to centre around the idea of transcendent love: “I’ve preserved only the idea of a fatal and irresistible love, which, as a rule leads to death, and which, to some extent evokes death, for it is a love that transcends the body, transcends even the limitations of the mind, and grows to a cosmic scale” (Messiaen in Samuel:30).

The story of Tristan and Isolde’s fatal love has substantially influenced Western artists for centuries. A notable example is Wagner’s grand music drama, composed in 1856-59. Messiaen was a great admirer of the German composer, and was strongly influenced by the way in which he reworked the structure of the myth in music. He adopted Wagner’s use of leitmotifs, although he treated the motifs significantly different. Particular scenes from Wagner’s opera also echo in Messiaen’s work. Both composers seem to give precedence to the myth’s emotional content, but they do so in rather different ways. Wagner presents the story in a narrative form, while Messiaen liberates himself from the logic of the storyline. The triangular love affair is totally overlooked, and even such a crucial element as the love potion, has been left out. In sharp contrast to the way in which Wagner’s spins out the final death scene, Messiaen’s references to mortality are swift and abrupt, as in movement 5, where death is illustrated with the horrifying line: “*Coupe moi la tête.*” Overall, Messiaen juxtaposes images of sensuality and exuberant life-affirming expressions with images of darkness and death. In this way, he makes a strong point of the songs’ love-death topic.

4.2. Human love – divine love

Great love is a reflection – a pale reflection, but nevertheless a reflection of the only genuine love, divine love (Messiaen in Samuel:30-31).

Scholars have considered *Harawi* a biographical work, related to the emotional crisis Messiaen was facing during the War years. His wife, Claire Delbos, to whom he dedicated his two previous song cycles, was gradually losing her memories as a result of an operation. Her mental health was seriously deteriorating, and these circumstances caused Messiaen great distress. The *Harawi* songs have thus been regarded as a farewell to her, although Messiaen himself never suggested any such connection. Despite these tragic events however, his creative energy seemed to boost, stimulated by the pianist Yvonne Loriod who entered Messiaen's class at the Conservatory in 1943. This exceptional pianist transformed "his vision of the world and his ways of thinking," not to mention his piano writing. His large piano cycle *Vingt regards* written in 1944 was dedicated to her, while his next work, *Harawi*, represents a significant thematic change in his music. Up to 1944, Messiaen's compositions had for the most part treated biblical subjects, and the music had included programme notes depicting the composer's religious visions. The extra-musical dimension of his compositions however, received strong reactions from the critics. As a result, a public debate on his music was raised, referred to as "le cas Messiaen," and the dispute culminated with the reception of *Vingt regards*. One of his ardent critics, Bernard Gavoty, blamed Messiaen for abandoning critical sense, being a prisoner of his own system, and characterized Messiaen's texts as parodies (Shenton:45). Consequently, Messiaen's following work, *Harawi*, includes no programmatic texts, not even a dedication. What's more, it treats a secular subject, human love. Messiaen does not return to religious topics until the organ cycle, *Meditations*, in 1960.

For a composer who aimed to communicate the Catholic theology through his music, this shift of focus from biblical subjects to the Tristan myth, seems remarkable. Why did Messiaen, the devout Christian, turn to a legend about human love? The artistic choice is obviously related to his personal experiences. By utilizing a medieval myth and folkloristic material, he could hide himself behind a mask and depersonalize the subject. It is, however, important to emphasize that the shift of topic was a gradual process. Through various works written during the 1930-1940s, Messiaen explored different aspects of the topic of love, from human desire to love of God. As a catholic, he was clearly concerned with the struggle between human passion and religious faith, causing an inner dilemma which he sought to

solve through his music. Sieglind Bruhn comments on this dichotomy: “When Messiaen began his exploration of the topic of love with the two song cycles of the 1930s, he was haunted by the fear that human passion might diminish the devotion owed to God. By the time of his *Tristan trilogy* in the late 1940s, he was fascinated by the inevitable connection between *eros* and *thanatos* in ”great” love (Bruhn:15). She continues: “Eros is the most intense form of desire and fulfillment experienced by humans. Eros can therefore be understood as a foretaste of what awaits the soul at the end of time in its union with God” (Bruhn:17).

In the piano cycles *Visions de l’amen* (43) and *Vingt regards* (44) Messiaen deals particularly with this antagonism: “I have been searching for a mystical language of love, at the same time varied, powerful and tender, at times brutal with a multicoloured order,”²⁰ he says in the foreword to *Vingt regards*. Andrew Shenton also addresses Messiaen’s religious outlook, and comments on how this is communicated through the symbolism of the Tristan works: “Symbols are still very apparent in these pieces, however, Tristan and Isolde can represent ‘everyman’ and ‘everywoman’, and the concept of ‘love-death’ – being truly united with someone only after death – is, in a sense deeply Christian. Superficially, the themes are of human love; the Christian themes require some exegesis, but they are certainly present” (Shenton:37). By expressing religious ideas in a tonal language that is immensely sensual, he conveys the belief that human desire was not at all contradictory to a religious outlook, and this attitude can also be perceived in the Tristan works.

4.3. The Tristan myth vs. Peruvian mythology

In *Harawi*, Messiaen places the two lovers of the Celtic myth among the Incas in southern Peru. The way he blends Western and native Inca material is perhaps the most captivating trait of the composition. Even the title of the song cycle is derived from the Inca language Quechua and suggests an atmosphere of exoticism. Moreover, Isolde has taken the name *Piroutcha*, an analogue character in Inca mythology, and she finds herself in a surrealistic dreamworld, where images from the mythology of the Incas blend with the Celtic myth. Messiaen derived his textual material from d’Harcourt’s source book, which included an

²⁰ “J’ai cherchée ici d’un langage d’amour mystique, à la fois varié, puissant et tendre, parfois brutale avec ordonnances multicolorées,”

outline of the Native American drama *Ollantay*. This recounts a story analogous to the Tristan myth, and this Andean myth influenced Messiaen's text. In addition, he employed various poetic images, originating in Inca poetry. The dove, a central image of his poems, is derived from an authentic *Yaravi* poem, depicting two doves in love. ("Les amoureuses colombes") (Traité VII:67). To further illustrate the image of doves, the onomatopoeic phrase "tougou" recurs in several poems, and this expression represents the cooing of doves. Textual phrases of other songs imitate monkey chants, or evoke the image of dancing grasshoppers. In all these instances, onomatopoeic Quechua terms are employed.

Messiaen utilizes the Peruvian source material on a purely phonetic level. The native language Quechua contains numerous onomatopoeic elements, an aspect of the language which fascinated Messiaen. In *Harawi*, he juxtaposes French text with words and syllables from Quechua, and the manner in which he plays with the sonorities of the words, is essential to the expressivity of the songs. The last section of the analysis will deal specifically with this aspect.

4.4. Surrealistic symbolism

Love and sensuality were favoured subjects among the Surrealists, and the Surrealist approach seems ideal to express the passion and sensuality associated with great love. It seems therefore natural that Messiaen draws on Surrealist method in a work which treats the Tristan material. The poet Paul Éluard was particularly renowned for his love poetry and was a major source of inspiration for Messiaen. In Larry Peterson's comparison of Messiaen's and Éluard's poetry, a strong kinship is revealed, not only in the way they both thematize love, but also in their nuanced colour depictions. "It is stronger than death, your love / Envelop me in your tenderness / Yellow-violet, vision / White veil / subtlety [...]"²¹ (Peterson:220-221). These lines by Éluard associate strongly with Messiaen's poetic expressions. Both Messiaen and the Surrealists aimed at moments of transcendence associated with love. Messiaen's expression of human love differed, however, from Surrealist representations of love, as his portrayals of love always encompassed a spiritual dimension. Peterson claims that "herein lies one important difference between Messiaen and the Surrealists. Most Surrealist poets were definitely opposed to Christianity believing that

²¹ Il est plus fort que la mort, votre amour / Mettez votre caresse tout autour / Violet-jaune, vision / Voile blanc, subtilité [...]

Christianity proposes that salvation exists outside each human being, whereas Surrealism proposes that each human has within herself the ability to succeed” (ibid).

Messiaen stated, however, that he have always had within himself a love of the marvellous²² (Gavoty:34), and in his music and poetry he sincerely searched for means to evoke a sense of magic amazement. The surrealists considered art similarly, as Breton declared in the first Manifesto of surrealism: “[...] the marvellous is always beautiful [...] in fact only the marvellous is beautiful” (Breton:14). The quest for magic in Surrealist art works resulted in colourful and stunning imagery. Griffiths explains how the surrealists “ [...] gave Messiaen the freedom to range as far as his imagination could travel in search of imagery, and gave him the verbal means thereby to suggest a different level of experience [...]” (Griffiths:88).

Influenced by Freud’s ideas of the subconscious, free association and dreams, they arranged their images in surprising juxtapositions. Harawi’s poetry demonstrates numerous instances of stunning surrealistic imagery. The verse of the song, “L’escalier redit, gestes du soleil,” exemplifies this, with its strikingly combined metaphors. Here, motifs derived from astronomy are juxtaposed with attributes of the human body: “sun of joyless cries,” “eye of heaven,” “gaiety flourishes in the arms of heaven,” “gestures of the sun.” Similarly, images connected to the human senses, are placed alongside abstract expressions: “silence is dead, embrace time” or “we sleep far from time in your gaze.” Different senses are also connected in the lines “your present eye which breathes” and “fire will consume our breaths.” These expressions, demonstrating interactions between different sense qualities, appear as highly surrealistic. The tendency of intergrating several sense qualities in one expression, may be ascribed to Messiaen’s synesthesia, his ability to perceive different sense impressions as one. It is a characteristic trait of modern poetry in general, where language’s ability to alternate between different sensual qualities, is utilized to create a dynamic expression (Refsum:86).

As poet-composer, Messiaen emphasized the musicality of the text, in the same way as the surrealists created non-logical, phonetic poetry. Inspired by a concert performance of Barraud’s musical setting of Reverdy’s poems in the thirties,²³ Messiaen decided that “not only would his texts be conceived in the course of composing, but the words would always be subordinated to the music, with questions of syllabic attack as relevant as literary meaning”

²² J’ai toujours eu le goût du merveilleux.

²³ First performance of Henry Barraud’s *Trois Poèmes de Pierre Reverdy* (1928-1932) at the Parisian Grand Palais.

(Bruhn:38). His musical thinking is thus reflected in the textual line. He employs single syllables repetitively in long phrases, or creates mirroring patterns of the text, which correspond perfectly with the musical line, yet with a total lack of semantic logic. Thus, the musical and textual meaning is acting together, in line with Surrealist thinking.

4.5. *Harawi* - the twelve poems

Although Messiaen emphasized that *Harawi*'s poems were intended as an intrinsic part of the musical expression, I will outline the twelve poems separately, considering this a useful preparation for the ensuing text-music analysis. However, to present Messiaen's texts as independent poems involves careful considerations. I will therefore, at the outset, define these, as well as the sources for the translations. These points of information are applicable to this section, as well as the chapter of analysis.

My translations of the poems are primarily based on Sieglind Bruhn's rendition (Bruhn:2008), yet specific phrases are derived from a former translation by Elisabeth A. Davidson. (Davidson:2001). The latter instances will be indicated in footnotes. The poems are quoted in English when my intention is to illustrate the semantic content of the text. When sonic or rhythmic features of the texts are addressed, quotations are in French. As the poems vary considerably in length, entire poems are seldom quoted in the running text. This is done only where it is necessary for clarifying the description. All twelve poems with translations are, however, presented in their entirety in appendix 1.

The poetic cycle of *Harawi* presents a whole range of contrasting moods, and takes the reader through a journey from exhilarating joy through dark anguish to eternal delight. The text fluctuates between purely lyrical and more dramatic elements, even including elements of dialogue, and this demonstrates Messiaen's predilection for ambiguities. Despite the shifting expressions, a development throughout the twelve poems can be discerned, evolving through three stages. The first part, poems 1 to 4, presents the two main characters in an overall idyllic setting. Part two, poems 5 to 9, introduces the love-death material and is darker in mood, while the last part, poems 10 to 12, focuses on heaven and eternity.

Part 1 – I “La ville qui dormait, toi”

In the opening poem we are introduced to the characters of the songs. The scene resembles an idyllic tableau: It's midnight, the town sleeps, while Tristan is gazing at Isolde who is asleep. At first reading, the poem associates with a Japanese haiku-poem owing to its brevity and surprising turn in the last strophe: “The sleeping town, you / My hand on your heart by you / Deep at midnight the bank, you / The double violet, you / The motionless eye that does not unravel your / Gaze, me.” The sleeping town is closely linked to the female character. In Messiaen's text, she *is* the sleeping town. Several images of this initial poem function as reference points for the succeeding work. The expression “double violet” recurs in several of the twelve poems, and the highly surrealistic image of the eye is a central image in *Harawi*, as well as a key image of this poem.

II: “Bonjour toi, colombe verte”

The second song depicts dawn in an idealized atmosphere. Images of birds, flowers and water characterize the text. The poetic refrain, mentioning the image of a green dove and limpid pearl, is presented for the first time. By these images Tristan declares his love for Isolde: “Good morning to you, green dove / returned from the heaven / good morning to you limpid pearl / departure from heaven”. The image of the green dove is considered a universal symbol of peace, and in the Andean myth of “Piruca”, the dove symbolizes unattainable love (Bruhn:158). Likewise, the delicate image of a transparent pearl corresponds to the idea of the precious and unachievable.

III: “Montagnes”

With this movement a sudden outburst of fear and dizziness interrupts the joyous atmosphere. The text is dark-colored, and the word black is predominant, illustrating the scene of mountains and stones. Messiaen was influenced by mountain landscapes in much of his music, and in this poem he introduces images of dizzying heights and bottomless abysses. This fearsome scenario illustrates the feeling of despair that accompanies the conflict between conscience and desire: “Violet-red, black on black / The antique, useless black beam / Mountain, listen to the solar chaos of vertigo.”

IV: "Doundou tchil"

The restless atmosphere of "Montagnes" is immediately overshadowed by the energetic dance rhythms of the succeeding movement "Doundou tchil". The text is part French, part Quechua. The onomatopoeic phrase of the title constitutes a major part of the text, and the expression alludes to the sound of percussive bells to evoke an atmosphere of folk dance. The poem introduces the character Piroutcha, the Peruvian analogue to the figure of Isolde, and her dance blends with cosmic images: "Doundou tchil / Piroutcha, there you are, o my mine / Dance of the stars, doundou tchil."

Part 2 – V: "L 'amour de Piroutcha"

In the opening of the song cycle's second part, the lovers realize the presence of death, thus of time and the fact that their love is not everlasting. The text is formed as a dialogue between a male and a female character. The mood changes between sadness and despair, and increasingly more intense emotional states uncover. The seemingly delightful lullaby of the opening is soon disrupted by the terrifying lines: "Your eye all the heavens, cut off my head, doundou tchil, our breaths, blue and gold, red, black and mauve chains, love death." From this poem off, death and anxiety become the main motifs of the text.

VI: Répétition planétaire

Primitive forest cries initiate this song. Its main text is based on Quechua expressions, evoking a sense of primitive ritual: "mapa, nama, mapa, nama, lila, tchil." The French text passages illustrate a sense of dizziness, referring back to the dark mountain landscapes of song 3, but also pointing to the planetary dances of later movements: "Mount a black cry / black echo of time / cry from anytime before the earth / black echo of time / winding staircase / vortex / red star / planet consumes in turning."

VII: Adieu

The key images of the poems, the green dove and the limpid pearl, appear here for the second time, yet this time they appear in an atmosphere of sorrow: "Farewell to you, green dove / sorrowful angel / farewell to you, limpid pearl / Guardian sun." The poem thematizes the

experience of parting, as when Tristan and Isolde must leave each other at dawn to keep their love secret. The love potion, which is of less importance in Messiaen's text, is mentioned once in this poem. The symbol serves as a reminder of the source of the lover's sorrow, and this is further illustrated by surrealistic juxtaposed images, such as "desert which weeps."

VIII: Syllabes

This poem represents a parallel to Brangäne's alba, a warning to the lovers that dawn has arrived and that they must part. However, Messiaen gives this image an exotic touch by letting the vocal line imitate monkey chant, repeating one, single syllable throughout large stretches of the text. This vocal arrangement functions moreover as an effective preparation for the dramatic content of the next poem.

IX: L'escalier redit, gestes du soleil

This movement presents the climax of the song cycle, musically as well as textually. It also brings the second part to an end. The poem presents a central image, a winding staircase leading from earth to heaven. The text literally circulates around this image, and presents striking metaphors, as in the middle section of the poem: "Water shall pass over our heads / Guardian sun / Fire will consume our breath / love potion for two voices." The love-death material is in focus, yet Messiaen moves away from the dark undercurrents of the previous movements, toward a joyous and exalted plane.

Part 3 – X: Amour oiseau d'étoile

In part 3 the lovers have elevated to a state of divinity, and this is depicted by images related to heaven: "Bird of the star / your singing eye / toward the stars / your head reversed under the sky." The central image of the star-bird illustrates the connection between earth and heaven. The poem is directly inspired by a surrealistic image, describing a motive of the head of a young woman, turned upside down, her body extending into the sky. In the background we discern a nightlit sky above a town, and the nocturnal atmosphere of the initial poem, "La ville qui dormait" recurs with this song.

XI: Katchi-katchi les étoiles

This song contrasts sharply to the lyrical lines of the previous song, both in term of overall mood, and by the the poem is arranged. Messiaen makes use of an onomatpoeic Quechua term, “Katchi-katchi.” The expression means grasshopper and the vivid image of the song is the small earthbound insect dancing and leaping among the stars: “Katchi-katchi the stars / make them leap / katchi-katchi the atoms / make them dance.”

XII: Dans le noir

The final song of *Harawi* functions as a grand recapitulation of the entire cycle, musically as well as poetically. The key images are repeated: “Dans le noir, colombe verte, dans le noir, limpide verte.” The expressions of darkness and distance clearly leave the impression of a heavenly existence. The poetic imagery of stars and cosmos alludes to the lovers eternal union in heaven. As in the original myth, Messiaen concludes the song cycle with the divine union of the lovers. The ending lines of the poem are similar to the opening of the composition; bringing the entire work together as a complete unit.

5. *Harawi* – an analysis of the text-music relationship

5.1. Introduction

Messiaen left extensive treatises of his musical techniques behind him, including analyses of own compositions. These make analyzing his music a grateful task. The treatises serve as primary sources for this analysis. My descriptions of *Harawi*'s musical material are based on Messiaen's writings, while in sections that examine material derived from Inca folklore, d'Harcourt's treatise is the main reference. This descriptive material has thus informed the structural analysis of the songs considerably. However, certain general questions concerning the interaction between text and music present themselves when working with Messiaen's songs. These questions have led me to look to the discourse of text-music relationships, and in the following, I will sum up my inquiry, as well as the specific writings that stimulated my thinking.

The very nature of the topic, text-music relationships, is open-ended, flexible and oriented towards process. Lawrence Kramer says: "Any discourse that hopes to embrace both arts must, so to speak, be mobile. Its mobility would consist in the power to treat both connotative and combinatory structures with equal exactness, agility, and sophistication" (Kramer1984:7). He explains further that text-music analyses generally tends to follow two broad tracks: one hermeneutic, the other semiotic, although this does not imply "choosing one over the other, since the two inevitably overlap. Rather it is a matter of determining – which is to say, both fixing and discovering – their relationship" (Kramer2002:37). Kramer's theories of text-music relationships reflect the hermeneutic approach: "Hermeneutic approaches assume that meaning in the larger sense is neither inherent in the object of interpretation nor constructible on the basis of meanings locally encoded in the object; interpretation entails the agency of an interpreter who is more than a decoder, even a creative one" (ibid). In relation to Messiaen's songs, these ideas are highly relevant. At a general level, when listening to vocal music, we assume that the textual line carries the meaning of the work. Yet in Messiaen's songs, the text fluctuates between the semantically meaningful and a non-verbal, onomatopoeic text.

What is expressed through the sound of a voice when the semantic meaning is eluded? The constant shifts of the vocal line between a semantically meaningful and a wordless text that occur in Messiaen's work, is perplexing. As listeners, we become attentive to that which is behind the lines, and this opens up for various interpretations.

5.1.1. Who is speaking?

Edvard Cone addresses this sort of concern, claiming that, as listeners, we tend to identify with the vocal expression. To experience a vocal work as meaningful, we believe in the narrative of the song, and we believe that the singer identifies with the persona who are portrayed, even though we know that this is an illusion. "To the extent that we do so, we tend to interpret the vocal character in terms of our own sympathies and emotions, and to feel ourselves involved in this. Each of us can thus participate in the sonic environment, and hence to a certain extent, in the nature of the character who comes to life by virtue of that environment" (Cone:22). The quote is derived from his book *The composer's voice*, where he examines the relationship between the voice of the composer and the persona of the work, the character who expresses himself/herself through the text. Cone explains that the singer's character alternates between three dimensions: Firstly, the poetic dimension where the words find their expression. Secondly, the vocal level, where the words are linked to a melodic line. Finally, at the vocal-instrumental level, the vocal line unites with the entire musical texture (Cone:23).

Obviously, in *Harawi* Messiaen presents Tristan as the work's persona, yet he obscures his character by the way he arranges the textual line, not the least through the alternations between French and onomatopoeic Quechua. How can we relate to the main character of the songs, Tristan, when the vocal line is no longer perceptible as meaningful text? Cone addresses this problem as he distinguishes between the verbal and the vocal, in a similar manner as we distinguish between the conscious and the unconscious. He defines the unconscious as "a realm of attitudes, feelings, impulses, and motivations, un verbalized either because they are essentially un verbalizable, or because they have not risen to the level of explicit articulation in the mind of the subject" (Cone:33). Cone gives further nuances to his understanding of the verbal expression: Poetry, as a verbal expression, manifests elements of the unconscious through its selection of words, its formal structure, its rhythm, and its sound. Thus, the boundaries between the verbal, the vocal and the instrumental become less distinct. The instrumental accompaniment places the vocal line into a broader context by developing

melodic lines, clarifying harmonic progressions or explicating rhythmic patterns. The role of the accompaniment is to illustrate the surroundings of the character, as well as to demonstrate how the character reacts to these surroundings (Cone:36-37). The possibilities of elaborating nuances of the text, is an advantage of the musical setting of text. Music operates in two different planes, both the successive plane of the melody, but also the simultaneous plane of harmony. In Messiaen's music, several elements occur simultaneously, and his musical language is often loaded with symbolic meaning. For us as listeners this may be a challenge: "For Messiaen, the problem is that he has often overloaded the music with multiple signification, making it difficult to comprehend many simultaneous musical and semiotic events. Perhaps his music requires an understanding of the content in advance of a presentation, and an expectation of what is to be heard?" (Shenton:10) Thus, the textual meaning and the musical expression of *Harawi* seem to blur. Messiaen was acutely aware of the way his music "spoke", and of the relation between the musical and the textual line: "Where the text suggests, the music explains; where the text hides and symbolizes, the music reveals; the music "tears the veil" and speaks the truth (TraitéVI:53).

5.1.2. Music as language

It is evident that Messiaen aimed at communicating very specific ideas through his music. His musical language is complex, however, and his messages had to be refined through verbal supplements, in form of extra-musical programmes. When examining Messiaen's music, whether vocal or instrumental works, it is inevitable to regard the music in light of these verbal, and often highly poetic, messages. They inform us of specific connotations of his musical language, and represent thus a central aspect of the total expression. Andrew Shenton has researched extensively into this aspect of Messiaen music. His particular field is Messiaen's sign system, and he regards Messiaen's music in the light of semiotic theories. His main argument is that all dimensions of Messiaen's music may be regarded as signs, musical as well as poetic: "What is interesting for analysis is that nearly all the individual components of his musical language act as signifiers in some capacity" (Shenton:7). In regard to Messiaen's music, bird song, colours or rhythms are all examples of musical signifiers. Messiaen's music then actualizes the inquiry around the connection between music and language. Is music a language, able to communicate specific ideas and emotions? Stravinsky believed that music is "essentially powerless to express anything at all [...]" (Shenton:166), while later theorists have pointed to the linguistic properties of music (Langer, Cooke).

Arguments about how to define musical meaning have varied enormously. Yet three distinct stages occur. Music is *imitative*, it is *expressive* and finally, *transcendent*. All three dimensions are applicable to Messiaen's music. His birdsong motifs have an imitative character. In addition, Messiaen overtly emphasized the expressive power of the music. In a commentary on one of the passionate sections of *Harawi*, he says: "Dans tout ce passage, la musique n'a pas d'importance – c'est le sentiment passionné qui emporte tout" (TraitéIII:306). Finally, his wish to communicate ideas of the spiritual and to conjure experiences of the divine, makes his music ultimately transcendental. The way in which he treats the Tristan myths, by contrasting earthly and divine states, demonstrates this dimension of his music.

5.1.3. Presentation of the analysis

Until now, various material relevant for the analysis, have been treated. Chapter 2 addressed biographical and historical aspects intended at portraying the vocal-composer Messiaen. Chapter 3 outlined his musical techniques with a particular focus on elements employed in *Harawi*. Eventually, in chapter 4, the textual material of the song cycle were treated specifically, concluding with a chronological outline of the twelve poems. These preliminary chapters were intended to pave the way for the main part of the study, the analysis of text-music relationships of *Harawi*.

As already stated, Messiaen's song cycle is a multifaceted and ambiguous piece of work. One of the main challenges of the analysis has therefore been to organize and present the twelve songs in a way that correlates with the central questions of the study. In preexistent analyses of the work the material is disposed in varying ways. E. A. Davidson's study of the Tristan trilogy presents the twelve songs chronologically (Davidson:2001). This illuminates the thematic development throughout the work, as well as revealing the shifting moods that occur from one movement to the next. In Sieglind Bruhn's study, the symbolic significance of the songs is strongly emphasized, and she arranges the composition according to threads of common imagery, thus reflecting the symbolistic cross-connections of the work (Bruhn:2008). Both these treatises have informed my own analysis significantly. I have, however, decided to consider the songs from a different angle, by addressing three distinct features that illuminate the text-music correspondences particularly well. To illustrate my main points, I will have to search back and forth in the composition, and thus keep a flexible focus of attention. My intention behind this disposition is to illuminate the intraconnection

between poetic and musical elements that the composition contains. Thus, some of the songs may be addressed in several chapters, yet with different emphasis, while others may be omitted from the analysis.²⁴

The three main fields of emphasis were sketched out in the introduction. The first part, chapter 5.2, will emphasize textual and musical patterns and how these patterns interweave. The chapter will primarily examine the cyclic theme and its corresponding text, as this is a strong uniting factor. It will thus include analyses of movement 2, 7, 9 and 12.

Images from both Surrealist poetry and painting influenced the poems of *Harawi*. In chapter 5.3, I have taken a selection of surrealistic metaphors as my points of departure. I will thereby examine Messiaen's use of these and look at how the musical line corresponds with the imagery. The analysis focuses primarily on movement 1, 9, 10 and 11.

Chapter 5.4 examines the phonetic and musical qualities of Messiaen's poetry. It deals particularly with how Quechua phrases are incorporated into the text, and how these elements reflect in the music. Extracts from movement 4, 6, 8 and 11 are analyzed, as these movements include characteristic onomatopoeic passages.

5.2. Motivic patterns in text and music

Although *Harawi* is founded on the medieval legend of Tristan and Isolde, Messiaen emphasized that he never intended to recreate the linear narrative of the story. His procedure resembles rather that of a sculptor creating a three-dimensional piece of art, by the way he wraps his material around the armature of the myth (Davidson:9). Musical and textual cross-references between movements can be discovered in various layers of the composition, creating an overall coherent form in spite of great diversity of material. This chapter will investigate the textual-musical weave of *Harawi*, and address particularly Messiaen's employment of cyclic themes.

Although Messiaen disregards the narrative of the story by playing with concepts of time and place throughout the work, the composition follows a time span from one night to the next. The night scenery of the first song ("La ville qui dormait, toi,") echoes in the ending lines of

²⁴ Song 3 and 5 are not dealt with in the analysis, but they will be mentioned when this is relevant for the overall analysis.

the final song. This nocturnal atmosphere encloses the composition in dark colours, and reflects the central theme of the composition, the agonizing tension between love and death.

As mentioned, Messiaen was strongly influenced by Wagner's use of leitmotifs, as a means of representing specific characters or ideas. Through the use of leitmotifs, or cyclic themes as Messiaen called them, his music could "speak with precision," confirming the idea that Messiaen considered music as a language by which he could communicate clearly. However, the compositional idea of employing cyclic themes, differ considerably from the German composer's techniques. While Wagner structures his narrative by developing the motifs, Messiaen employs them in order to create coherence of his disparate material. He employed this compositional strategy in a number of works, from the piano cycle *Visions de l'amen* (1943) to his late opera. In addition, Messiaen created motivic interconnections between different compositions, by incorporating previously presented material. The "Theme of chords" of *Vingt regards* reappears, for instance, in the seventh movement of *Harawi*. Overall, a number of musical ideas in the Tristan works reappear in later works, and this is "possibly the most important aspect of the Tristan trilogy" (Sherlaw Johnson:101). Thus, Messiaen creates a subtle network of musical ideas, bringing several of his compositions together into one complete œuvre, musically as well as thematically.

It is in the works where Messiaen thematizes love that the employment of cyclic themes stands out most clearly. The themes are liable to be regarded as masculine and feminine, as the "statue" and "flower" theme of the *Turanga-lila*. Messiaen's notion of non-development, of deepening and exploring rather than developing a basic idea, has found a musical solution in his use of cyclic themes. Hence, cyclic themes could represent transcendental or ecstatic moments, liberated from time: "Instead of developing his themes so that one form grows from another, he presents the altered form as a *fait accompli*, and so in this way too the music releases itself from embodying a forward progression through time" (Griffiths:133).

If the themes do not alter by development, they certainly undergo changes by the way in which they appear in different musical contexts. The themes in themselves are clearly identifiable, yet the total expression is transformed through Messiaen's arrangements. Accordingly, Adorno's statement about Wagner's use of leitmotifs, is equally applicable to Messiaen's music: "Only in an articulated framework is it possible for the motiv to take its place and for the technique of the developing sequence to generate the allegorical meaning which the leitmotif requires [...]" (Adorno:36).

In Messiaen's composition, the cyclic theme is crucial for the overall structure of the work. In the next chapters we shall see how Messiaen utilizes the melodic line by weaving it into various layers of the music. However, the main theme of his songs has a significant backstory.

5.2.1. *Thème d'amour*

In the winter of 1945, half a year prior to the completion of *Harawi*, Messiaen was given an extraordinary commission. A theatre piece by Lucien Fabre based on the myth of Tristan and Isolde was to be premiered at Theatre Édouard in Paris, and Messiaen was asked to provide music for the performances in form of recorded organ improvisations. A ten-bar melodic theme served as basis for the improvisations, and the theme was entitled *Thème d'amour*. A reproduction of the theme with its harmonization was included in the theatre programme, and from this sketch we instantly recognize the tonal language of Messiaen (Hill:143). However, the melody is not entirely the composer's own work, but an adaptation of a Peruvian folk song entitled *Delirio*. Messiaen discovered the song in the treatise on Inca folklore by the d'Harcourts, referred to previously. Both textual and musical material derived from the d'Harcourt collection were utilized in *Harawi*, creating a fascinating musical mosaic. Thus, a structuring component is vital, and the manner in which Messiaen incorporates melancholic folk songs as the melodic basis for his composition provides for this. We have already heard that Messiaen built the composition around a cyclic theme, identified as the theme which was utilized in Fabre's theatre piece. The theme is crucial for the overall structure of the work, and in the next chapters we shall see that Messiaen utilized the melodic line to the fullest by weaving it into the many layers of the music.

The cyclic theme appears in movement 2, *Bonjour toi, colombe verte*, movement 7, *Adieu*, in the last movement, *Dans le noir*, and is incorporated in the mid-section's passages of movement 9, *L'escalier redit, gestes du soleil*. The three structuring movements, 2, 7 and 12, share the main harmonic and melodic material, but as the accompaniment varies, each movement has its own unique expression. The cyclic theme functions thus as a structuring device, by dividing the composition into three distinct parts.

In figure 3, the structuring movements are highlighted, and we recognize the three-part structure of the composition. The right part of the figure illustrates how the main theme,

framed by the “nocturnal” motif, produces a symmetric pattern, for which Messiaen, as we have seen, had a special preference:

Figure 11:

Part 1	<i>I: La ville qui dormait, toi</i>	<i>I: La ville qui dormait, toi</i>
	II: Bonjour toi, colombe verte	II: Bonjour toi, colombe verte
	<i>III: Montagnes</i>	
	<i>IV: Doundou tchil</i>	
Part 2	<i>V: L’amour de Piroutcha</i>	
	<i>VI: Répétition planétaire</i>	
	VII: Adieu	VII: Adieu
	<i>VIII: Syllabes</i>	
Part 3	<i>IX: L’escalier redit, gestes du soleil</i>	
	<i>X: Amour oiseau d’étoile</i>	
	<i>XI: Katchikatchi les étoiles</i>	
	XII: Dans le noir	XII: Dans le noir
		<i>(coda: La ville qui dormait...)</i>

In a previous chapter the origins for the cyclic theme was traced. Figure 12a shows the original Peruvian melody, *Delirio*, and compares it with Messiaen’s reworking. (Figure 12 b)

Figure 12a): Delirio, Yaravi from Arequipa, Peru

Passionné et douloureux ♩ = 66 **Arequipa (Peru)**

Di - me mi bien has - ta cuan - do, Ay! mi due - fio!

He de - te - ner que a - go - tar Mi su - fri - mien - to,

Sin dar - mer con - sue - lo, Sin dar - me es - pe - ran - za,

Sin po - der lla mar - te mi - a En al gun - tiem - po!

Figure 12 b): *Thème d'amour, Messiaen*



Before addressing the specific rearrangement of the melodic theme, we will look at how the melodic elements can be discerned within *Harawi*'s overall structure, by determining the harmonic layout of the entire composition. Eb, F# and G, the three initial notes of the theme, are the central notes of several movements. Except for movements without a defined tonality, these three tonalities predominate the composition: Eb is the tonality of movement 2, 7, 9, 11 and 12. F# is the tonality of movement 10, while G major forms the tonal basis of movement 1, 5, 8 and the coda of movement 12:

Figure 13:

G	I: <i>La ville qui dormait, toi</i>
E ^b	II: <i>Bonjour toi, colombe verte</i>
Atonal/polymodal	III: <i>Montagnes</i>
E	IV: <i>Doundou tchil</i>
G	V: <i>L'amour de Piroutcha</i>
Atonal	VI: <i>Répétition planétaire</i>
E ^b	VII: <i>Adieu</i>
G	VIII: <i>Syllabes</i>
E ^b	IX: <i>L'escalier redit, gestes du soleil</i>
F#	X: <i>Amour oiseau d'étoile</i>
E ^b /C	XI: <i>Katchikatchi les étoiles</i>
E ^b /G/Polymodal	XII: <i>Dans le noir</i>

The original melody has a four-part structure: A-B-C-B. Messiaen varies the formal layout of the theme each time it appears. Common for all versions is, however, the opening phrase and the concluding E^b major chord.

Furthermore, we notice that the regular $\frac{3}{4}$ rhythm of the original melody has been altered in accordance to Messiaen's preference for irregular rhythmic patterns. He applies the principle of additive rhythms, thereby avoiding the original metric structure. By adopting the symmetric Hindu rhythm called "Vijaya," non-retrogradable rhythmic patterns appear. (see fig. 8)

Peruvian folk music was commonly based on pentatonism, and this melody is no exception. Messiaen adapts it to mode 2¹ by altering F to F# and C to D^b. He keeps the original tonality E^b as the central key of the entire composition. Mode 2¹ was Messiaen's preferred mode, and the mode is fundamental in *Harawi*. As mentioned in a previous chapter, Messiaen's modes corresponded to complexes of colours, and mode 2¹ was described by a colour-shading predominated by blue and violet: "Rouchers bleu violet, parsemés de petits cubes gris, bleu de cobalt, bleu de prusse foncé, avec quelques reflets pourpre violacé, or, rouge rubis, et des étoiles mauves, noires, blanches. Dominante: Bleu violet" (Traité VII:118). It was also mentioned how colours were means of communication to Messiaen, yet on a non-verbal level. He described the colour associations in his music as a close rapport with another reality: "a rapport so powerful that it can transform our most hidden, deepest, most intimate self, and dissolve us into a higher Truth than we could hope to reach" (Messiaen in Shenton:50).²⁵ In *Harawi*, the choice of colour was symbolically connected to love. "The colour violet, when it has more red in it, was said by Messiaen to be traditionally symbolic of the Truth of love, while when it tended toward blue, it symbolized the Love of truth" (Davidson:25). Violet is the first and the last colour referred to in the poems, thus music and text correspond on a symbolic level.

In the poetic refrain of the structuring songs, it is, however, the colour green which is central, as the phrase combines two images, a green dove and a transparent pearl, "colombe verte" and "perle limpide." The three poems are compared below, showing how Messiaen creates totally different modes of expression that correspond to their musical context: the first presentation expresses the joy of love, the second introduces the death theme, while the final presentation describes the bliss of eternity. In that way, the three songs represent three stages in the narrative of the composition:

²⁵ Quote from Conference de Notre Dame, p. 11.

Mov. 2:

*Bonjour toi, colombe verte,
Retour de ciel.
Bonjour toi, perle limpide.
Depart de l'eau.*

*Good morning to you, green dove,
Returned from heaven.
Good morning to you, limpid pearl,
Departure from the water.*

Mov. 7:

*Adieu toi, colombe verte,
Ange attristé.
Adieu toi, perle limpide,
Soleil gardien.*

*Farewell to you, green dove,
Sorrowful angel.
Farewell to you, limpid pearl,
Guardian sun.*

Mov. 12:

*Dans le noir, colombe verte
Dans le noir, perle limpide.
Dans le noir, mon fruit de ciel, de jour,
Lointain d'amour.*

*In the dark, green dove,
In the dark, limpid pearl,
In the dark, my fruit of heaven, of day,
Far away from love.*

In the following we shall address the three structuring movements separately, as well as movement 9, which also utilizes the structuring material.

5.2.2. Bonjour toi, colombe verte

The first presentation of the cyclic theme conveys a sense of lightness and joy. It is dawn, and Tristan greets Isolde: "Good morning to you, green dove / Returned from heaven / Good morning to you, limpid pearl / Departure from the water." The cyclic theme with its corresponding key images, the green dove and the limpid pearl, are heard for the first time. These images are highly surrealistic and have various connotations. In Peruvian mythology the image of the green dove appears in the story of Piruça, where the bird unfaithfully deserts her mate, symbolizing unattainable love. Western iconography presents the dove as a symbol of peace, while the colour green is associated with spring, renewal and hope. Messiaen applies the bird image to convey a religious dimension of love; the bird can be regarded metaphorically as a messenger between the spiritual and the earth. This idea is reflected in the line: "Bonjour toi, colombe verte / Retour de ciel." The image of a translucent pearl reflects both preciousness and clarity, identifying Isolde with the image of perfect love.

How are these poetic expressions represented musically? We have already mentioned that Messiaen harmonizes the vocal line in mode 2¹, which adds a distinct colour to the theme. He employs this mode further in the broken chord embellishments in high-tessitura,

accompanying the vocal line. These passages clearly demonstrate Messiaen's fondness of extracting major or minor triads from a modal pitch supply. Eb and C major triads are superposed A major triads, yet all are extracted from mode 2₁. The bright-sounding result highlights the exuberant atmosphere of the song.

Figure 14, mov. 2, bar 1-4:

The musical score for Figure 14, movement 2, bars 1-4, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line (CHANT) and the piano accompaniment (PIANO). The tempo is marked 'Tres modéré'. The key signature has two flats (Bb and Eb). The vocal line starts with 'Bon - jour toi, co - lom - be'. The piano accompaniment features complex rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, with dynamic markings like 'p', 'f', and 'mf'. The second system continues the vocal line with 'ver - te,' and the piano accompaniment with further complex rhythmic patterns and dynamic markings like 'p' and 'f'.

Here, Messiaen translates the poetic metaphors directly into musical language. The following phrase demonstrates a similar feature. An intricate descending piano passage, based on mode 2₁, creates a pattern of major and minor sevenths, major thirds and perfect fourths. The passage accompanies the line “retour de ciel,” At the final word, *ciel*, the passage releases into an E^b major triadic row. This illustrates the poem's descending movement from earth to heaven, as well as the association between perfection and divinity.

The second half of the poem presents another compound of images, “étoile enchainée, ombre partagée.” These metaphors, linked stars and shared shadow, symbolize the close bond between the two lovers as they project one single shadow. The chained images of flower, fruit, water and heaven will reappear in later movements, first of all in the remaining structuring movements. These images are employed as further endearments of Isolde. The flower symbol of the ensuing line is associated with the colour green and with spring.

Referring back to an earlier composition by Messiaen, *Les corps glorieux*, the image of water is associated with the spiritual, as “the water of grace.”

*Étoile enchaînée,
Ombre partagée,
Toi, de fleur, de fruit,
de ciel et d'eau,
Chant des oiseaux.
Bonjour,
D'eau.*

*Enchained star,
Shared shadow,
You, of flower, of fruit, of heaven and of water
of heaven and of water,
Birdsong,
Good morning,
Of water.*

The song of blackbirds provides musical material for the piano solos that interjects the main theme. These are supported harmonically by an E_b chord. Furthermore, birdsong motifs accompany the second vocal section, and this creates a clear musical-poetic link between the accompaniment and the line “chant des oiseaux.” Towards the end of the movement, thrilling ascending piano passages reflect the image of the bird, ascending to heaven.

Through the simple wording of the final line “bonjour/d'eau,” Messiaen seems to have eliminated all unnecessary utterings. The phrase simply echoes the preceding text, “as if the lovers in the certainty of expected bliss were unconcerned with weighty messages” (Bruhn:160). The simplicity of expression is reflected in the music. The three syllables correspond to an E_b triad, simply accentuating the central tonality of the composition.

The song manifests a close bond between the poetic imagery and the musical accompaniment, and the general impression of the textual-musical relationship is that of a musical line characterizing the poetic imagery mimetically, rather than manifesting an independent element. Lawrence Kramer claims that the degree of emphasis on either the mimetic or the formal-musical aspects varies between different works and styles, yet: “Both music and poetry juxtaposes elements that are referential, mimetic, or conceptual with purely formal patterns that are largely independent of external meanings” (Kramer:5).

The examination of the next structuring song, movement 7, will demonstrate how the balance between mimetic and formal means is altered, although Messiaen utilizes similar poetic and musical material as in movement 2.

5.2.3. Adieu

The atmosphere of this song differs totally from the foregoing, and this demonstrates Messiaen's mastery of shaping his material into whatever expression he intends. In contrast to the joyous 2nd movement, this song communicates deep sorrow, unmistakably illustrated through the piano solos that intersperse the main theme. In the opening lines we hear of

Tristan wishing Isolde good-bye, and this is a signal of the definitive separation that is to come in the final movement. The poem is charged with metaphors that reflect the solemn atmosphere:

*Adieu toi, colombe verte
 Ange attristé.
 Adieu toi, perle limpide,
 Soleil gardien.
 Toi, de nuit, de fruit de ciel, de jour,
 Aile d'amour.
 Adieu toi, lumière neuve,
 Philtre à deux voix
 Etoile enchainée,
 Ombrée partagée
 Dans ma main mon fruit de ciel, de jour
 Lointain d'amour.
 Adieu toi, mon ciel de terre,
 Adieu toi, désert qui pleure,
 miroir sans souffle d'amour
 De fleur, de nuit, de fruit, de ciel, de jour,
 Pour toujours.*

*Farewell to you, green dove
 Sorrowful angel.
 Farewell to you, limpid pearl,
 Guardian sun.
 You of night, of fruit, of haven, of day,
 Wing of love,
 Farewell to you, new light,
 Love potion in two voices.
 Enchained star,
 Shared shadow,
 In my hand, my fruit of heaven, of day,
 Far away from love.
 Farewell to you, my earthly heaven,
 Farewell to you, weeping desert,
 Mirror without breath of love,
 Of flower, of night, of fruit, of heaven, of day,
 Forever.*

Apart from the key images of the opening lines, Tristan addresses Isolde as: "the new light, my heaven on earth, weeping desert." Furthermore, the images of the "sad angel" and "wing of love" suggest a connection to the celestial. An overall view of these expressions, shows how Messiaen utilizes poetic alliteration. The vocal "a" dominates in the first lines: "adieu," "ange," "aile," and vocals are further emphasized in the line "Etoile enchainée, ombrée partagée." The sonority of the vocal expression enhances the sorrowful expression of the song, and the phonetic arrangement of the poem proves the close connection between vocal sound and poetic expression.

It is not without reason that this song alludes, exceptionally, to the magical love potion in the line "Philtre à deux voix." In the original myth the love potion was a symbol, not only of bliss, but also of misery, and it represented what was beyond rational logic in the lives of the lovers. Messiaen's poetic allusion connects his verse to the original myth, and underscores the overall anxious atmosphere of the song. Effectfully, the word "philtre" is set to a descending tritone in the melodic line.

Overall, the song has a solemn character. How is this expressed in music? In sharp contrast to the embellished passages of movement 2, this version of the main theme has a much simpler structure, and the only addition to the main harmonics is the bass line's accentuation of the tritone interval $E^b - A - E^b$ (see figure 15):

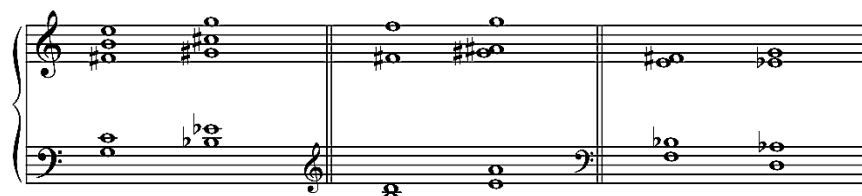
Figure 15: mov. 7, opening bars:



The piano solos represent contrasting material to the main theme. In the previous movement these were written in bird style. In this movement the material for the piano solos derives from the main theme. The use of a concise selection of musical material creates a distinctive musical expression, characterized by accentuated rhythms and repeated dissonant chords. The sonic association with percussion is specified in the score: “as a tam-tam” and “as bells.” The dynamic indications vary between *f* and *ff*, and this enhances the stern expression. The melodic line circles around the minor second, $F\# - G$, the major second $F - G$, and the minor third $E - G$, and the correlation between these pitch cells and the opening of the main theme, $E_b, F\#, G$ is evident. The motifs are arranged in octave leaps to create dynamic variety, and the melodic cells are linked to three pairs of chords:

Figure 16: a) chord material of piano solos in *Adieu*, b) *Adieu*, bar 17-21:

a) *Adieu*: Chords in piano solos



b) Adieu: bar 17-21

The musical score for 'Adieu' (bars 17-21) is presented in two systems. The first system is marked 'Très modéré' and the second system is marked 'Un peu plus lent'. The piano accompaniment features a complex harmonic structure with frequent changes in chord quality and dynamics, including 'sfz' (sforzando) and 'più f' (più forte). The vocal line is characterized by a melodic phrase that reaches a B2 note, which is the highest note in the composition. The score is in E-flat major and 4/4 time.

The dominant interval of the first pair is the perfect and augmented fourths, while the next pair is characterized by the diminished octave. These two pairs of chords are notable: they refer in the first place back to the “Theme of chords” of *Vingt regards*; and secondly, to similar chordal motifs in previous movements of *Harawi*. The appoggiaturas of the final chords of movement 1 utilizes similar tone material. This creates a subtle harmonic connection between the movements which in other facets vary greatly. It also exemplifies how movements or entire compositions are tied together through cross-references in the harmonic material.

The final vocal phrase of the song presents an unexpected and particularly moving modulation, which appears as the song’s focal point. The poetic line of this phrase is highly expressive: “Adieu toi, mon ciel de terre / Adieu toi, désert qui pleure / Miroir sans souffle d’amour / De fleur, de nuit, de fruit, de ciel, de jour / Pour toujours.” The melodic phrase begins as the, by now established, main theme in E^b. However, in the next phrase Messiaen transposes the theme and expands the melodic range, so that it reaches a B², the very top note of the entire composition (see figure 17):

Figure 17: *Adieu*, bar 71-75:

The image displays a musical score for the song 'Adieu', specifically bars 71 through 75. It consists of two systems of staves. The top system includes a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The vocal line begins with a *più f* marking and contains the lyrics 'A - dieu toi, dé - sert qui pleu - - - re,'. The piano accompaniment also starts with *più f* and features a series of triadic chords. The bottom system continues the vocal line with the lyrics 'mi - roir sans souf - fle d'a - mour, De fleur, de' and includes a *dim.* marking. The piano accompaniment continues with similar harmonic structures, including a *dim.* marking. The score is written in a key with two flats (B-flat and E-flat) and a 4/4 time signature.

The top note coincides dramatically with the word "pleure." The entire musical line underlines this crucial moment of the song. Superpositioned sequences of triadic chords run through the entire section. These run in parallel movement, but at the top point a large, sweeping gesture occurs, as these turn into countermovement. The bass line indicates a tonal cadence, $E^b - A^b - B^b - E^b$, where the dominant, B^b , coincides with the top note. This creates a sense of suspended tension. The augmented octave between the low and top voice, emphasizes this focal point.

The emotive power of this phrase is evident, and accordingly, the harmonic language sounds extremely rich. It is therefore noteworthy that Messiaen creates the entire musical passage from a single mode. The phrase is based on mode 2, but Messiaen moves through three different transpositions of the mode, utilizing all its colouring possibilities. The first phrase builds on the first transposition, centred in E^b . The second phrase starts in 2^3 based on the subdominant, while it changes to 2^2 at the point of culmination, the word *pleure*. It returns to 2^3 at *miroir*, before the phrase ends in 2^1 . As a result, a symmetric harmonic pattern appears, based on the transpositions of mode 2: $2_1 - 2_3 - 2_2 - 2_3 - 2_1$. An outline of the melodic contour reveals a further symmetrical pattern: $H^1 - D^2 - H^2 - D^2 - H^1$.

Messiaen described this moment of the song cycle as a "culmination of expressivity and intensity"²⁶ (Traité:296), and he explains the imagery of the phrase "miroir sans souffle d'amour," thus: "Ici, le souffle est le symbole de l'échange des vies et des personnalités dans l'amour, - est c'est pourquoi Yseult et Tristan et l'aimée le miroir de l'aimée"²⁷ (Traité:295). The lovers are fatally connected to each other, yet they must separate. Notwithstanding the high-strung excitement of this phrase, it represents only a foretaste of the climax that is to come in the 9th movement.

5.2.4. L'escalier redit, gestes du soleil

This climax point occurs in the middle section of movement 9, *L'escalier redit, gestes du soleil*, and it is also here we find the cyclic material, although it is structured significantly different from the other three movements. Here, the theme weaves through the musical texture rather than forming a distinct melodic line, creating a development towards the climax of the song. In fact, the entire song cycle culminates in this central passage, and the high point is reached with the vocal declamation: "l'amour la joie!" According to Messiaen, this moment comprises "le summum lyrique, le summum d'intensité et de passion de tout *Harawi*" (TraitéIII:304). In the following, we shall look at how the structuring material has been employed in order to underscore the emotional intensity of the poem. The first part of the middle section, presents the following textual lines:

(1)	<i>Du ciel, de l'eau, du temps, Ton oeil présent qui respire.</i>	<i>himmel, vann, tid Ditt nærværende øye som ånder</i>
(2)	<i>De l'eau, du temps, du ciel, Le coeur de l'horloge folle.</i>	<i>Vand, tid, himmel, Det gale urs hjerte.</i>
(3)	<i>La mort est là, ma colombe verte.</i>	<i>Døden er der, min grønne due,</i>
(4)	<i>La mort est là, ma perle limpide</i>	<i>Døden er der min klare perle,</i>
(5)	<i>La mort est là. Nous dormons loin du temps Dans ton regard.</i>	<i>Døden er der. Vi sover fjernt fra tiden I ditt blikk.</i>
(6)	<i>Je suis mort.</i>	<i>Jeg er død.</i>

²⁶ Summum d'expression et d'intensité

²⁷ Here, the breath is the symbol of the exchange of lives and existences in love – and that is why Tristan and Isolde love the reflection of the beloved.

The text presents a triple image of heaven, water and time. Death is mentioned several times, also in combination with the structuring images from previous movements, the green dove and the limpid pearl. Musically, the section is divided into six phrases, (indicated by numbers in the left column.) It builds on three motivic elements:

- oscillating passages based on the “thème d’amour.” (fig.18, bar 45-46)
- a “cry of love,” a short and fiery chordal motif. (fig. 18, bar 41)
- a circular three-note motif. (fig. 18 bar 42-44)

Figure 18: Movement 9, bar 40-46.

The musical score for Movement 9, bars 40-46, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line with lyrics "pl - re. De l'eau, du temps," and the piano accompaniment. The second system shows the vocal line with lyrics "du ciel, Le cœur de l'hor - lo - ge fol - le." and the piano accompaniment. The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* and *fff*, and a "Red." (Reduction) section at the end.

The main vocal passages are based on the cyclic material from the “Thème d’amour.” As in the structuring movements, the passages build on mode 2¹ with E^b as its tonal centre. Along with the textual key images, the dove and the pearl, these passages correspond clearly with the three structuring movements.

In the following, we shall look at how these musical elements are arranged to developing sequence of great intensity. Each phrase opens with a forceful signal of the three ascending chords. The chordal motif, illustrating a “cry of love,” can be derived back to the final chords of the first movement. Similar chord connections within Messiaen’s works, have been

pointed to previously. This is an especially intriguing example as the difference in expression between the two movements could hardly be greater: from the immensely delicate expression of the first song to the dramatic expression of the present song.

These chords are followed by a three-note melodic motif. The motif is built on the Greek rhythm *epitrite*, and is repeated three times. It produces a pattern based on the notes F, G and B^b, supported by a diminished chord on F. This has significance in the harmonic scheme of the movement. By introducing the non-modal notes F and A^b, Messiaen signals a harmonic shift, which leads to a new level in the musical progress. The musical motif accompanies the triple poetic image of heaven, water and time, as well as the line “la mort est là.” Eventually, this section which represents the first stage in the development towards climax, concludes with the phrase “je suis mort.”

Then, in the succeeding passage, the expression intensifies radically. In movement 7, we noticed how Messiaen employs tonal strategies to illustrate particularly expressive moments in the narrative. This section demonstrates a similar feature. The structuring material is still evident, but Messiaen alternates between passages based on mode 2³ centred on A^b, and 2¹ centred on E^b. The listener will perceive this as a heightened harmonic anticipation, caused by the tonic-subdominant relationships that occur. The musical expression is further intensified as the interspersing motifs of the previous section are omitted, and the melodic range of the passage expands. The expression of the text intensifies equally, presenting stunningly dramatic images:

*L'eau dépassera nos têtes,
Soleil gardien.
Le feu mangera nos souffles,
Philtre à deux voix.
Nos regards d'un bout à l'autre
Vus par la mort.
Inventons l'amour du monde
Pour nous chercher, pour nous pleurer,
pour nous rêver, pour nous trouver.
Du ciel, de l'eau, du temps,
Ton coeur qui bat,
Mon fruit, ma part de ténèbres,
tu est là, toi.
L'amour, la joie!*

*Water shall pass over our heads
Guardian sun.
Fire will consume our breath,
Love potion for two voices.
Our gazes from one end to the other,
Seen by death.
Let us invent the love of the world
To seek ourselves, to weep for ourselves,
To dream of ourselves, to find ourselves.
Heaven, water, time
Your beating heart,
My fruit, my share of darkness,
you are there, you.
Love, joy!*

The line “Inventons l’amour du monde” represents the first climax point. Messiaen has then moved from E^b, via the subdominant A^b, and the dominant B^b is reached at the word “monde.” At that moment the mode is transposed to 2² and these subtle harmonic manoeuvres

create dramatic changes in the total expression. To fully underscore the dramatic moment, the singer reaches and lingers on a B² supported by a large crescendo in the piano part:

Figure 19: mov.9, bar 67-70:

The musical score for Figure 19 consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 67-70. The vocal line has lyrics: "Vus par la mort. In - ven - tons l'a - mour du". The piano part features a large crescendo and a "poco riten." marking. The second system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 71-74. The vocal line has lyrics: "de Pour nous cher - cher,". The piano part features a large crescendo and a "poco riten." marking. The third system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for measures 75-78. The vocal line has lyrics: "de Pour nous cher - cher,". The piano part features a large crescendo and a "poco riten." marking.

From this climactic peak, the music winds down and reaches a standstill. The three-note *epitrite* motif reappears, accompanying the line “Ton coeur qui bat.” The heartbeats are sensed through the music. By augmenting the note values, a *ritardando* effect is achieved. This phrase leads, unexpectedly to an A^b and the music pauses at the word “toi.” At this moment of stillness, the musical line seems to take a deep in-breath before the climatic expression “l’amour, la joie!”

Figure 20:



The harmonic progression of this phrase, $A^b - F^{7-6} - C^bm - D^7 - G^b$, emphasizes each syllable of the phrase. The wide register and low-pitched bass line, further accentuates the textual expression.

These passages demonstrate how the structuring material, melodic as well as poetic, functioned as building blocks for the composition's most dramatic passages. We noticed that Messiaen turns to tonally based harmony when he wishes to build longer sequences which move towards climaxes of particularly high intensity. His tonal scheme in these sections seems to be carefully worked out, and the harmonic correspondence between this passage and movement 7, is evident. Moreover, the harmonic language of these songs is reminiscent of Wagner's musical language. Just as every note of Wagner's music had emotional content, Messiaen emphasized the importance of the poetic expression in this above the music: "In this passage the music has no importance – it is the passionate sentiment which contains it all"²⁸ (TraitéIII:306).

²⁸ Dans tout ce passage la musique n'a pas d'importance - c'est le sentiment passionné qui emporte tout.

5.2.5. Dans le noir.

With the final movement of *Harawi*, "Dans le noir," the fervent passion of the 9th song is left behind. This song is rather characterized by a calm serenity. Compositionally, the movement functions as a recapitulation, as it is largely constructed on thematic material derived from earlier movements. Besides the cyclic theme, the initial theme of first song composition appears towards the very end. We also hear the central theme of movement 8, which Messiaen denoted as a 2nd "Thème d'amour." It is interesting that Messiaen adopts this formal layout for his composition, reminiscent of a sonata recapitulation. In *Technique*, he rejected this formal principle as outdated, and emphasized the importance of the development stage (Messiaen 1956:40).

Besides the obvious musical function of citing previous material, this scheme of recapitulation has narrative significance. Thematically, the final stage of the myth has been reached. It is dark; death has separated the two lovers and the recurrences of previous material reflect the lovers' recollections of the past. The poem also contemplates on the lovers' separation, by pointing to the endless distance between them:

*Dans le noir, colombe verte
Dans le noir, perle limpide.
Dans le noir, mon fruit de ciel, de jour
Lointain d'amour.
Mon amour, mon souffle!
Colombe, colombe verte,
Le chiffre cinq à toi,
La violette double, doublera,
Très loin, tout bas, très loin.
La ville qui dormait...*

*In the dark, green dove
In the dark, limpid pearl
In the dark, my heavenly fruit, of day
Far from love.
My love, my breath!
Dove, green dove,
The number five for you,
The double violet, doubled
Very far, very deep, very far.
The sleeping town...*

The tempo of the song is extremely slow and in terms of length it is the largest song of the composition. However, the poem is brief and appears as fragmentary. The instrumental part plays the principal role, and seems to progress steadily throughout the movement, unaffected by the vocal line. Compared with the 2nd movement where the accompaniment responded to details of the poetic imagery, this movement seemed to be planned differently in terms of text-music correspondence. In the following, we shall look into this relationship, by first addressing the musical arrangement of the song.

The formal design of the movement reflects the thematic idea of the unlimited dimensions of eternity. The cyclic theme opens the song, as in the previous settings of the main theme.

However, this version differs greatly from the other two, as Messiaen omits the consequent clause of the phrase. The thematic presentation of the song is then limited to three phrases, followed by a long piano solo, and then the recapitulation material enters. The way in which phrases remain unconcluded conveys a sense of open-endedness to the work. Combined with a slow tempo, it reflects the poem's atmosphere of timelessness and eternity.

The vocal theme is marvelously combined with a descending row of soft and weightless chords. This chord sequence progresses slowly from the fourth octave in the first bar to the subcontra octave at the end of the movement, covering the entire keyboard of the piano. In the analysis of the 2nd and 7th movement, I made a point of Messiaen's original use of a limited pitch material. In this passage, the melody, and its harmonic accompaniment builds entirely on mode 2¹, yet the expression is of a totally different realm than that of the previous arrangements. This piano passage moves almost seamlessly into expansive piano solos, which alternate with the three vocal phrases (see fig. 21). The musical line appears as a continuous, unbroken sequence. The descending chord passage accompanying the vocal phrases, turns into two chord sequences in the solo part. These create an intricate rhythmic and harmonic overlapping pattern, yet the section is based on consistent material and well-defined techniques. In the following we shall look closer at how it is constructed.

Figure 21: Movement 12, bar 4-9, 1st piano solo.



Harmonically, the two sequences are based on pitch collections of the modes, as the upper staff's six chords are derived from mode 6⁵, while the lower staff's seven chords are derived from mode 4⁶. Furthermore, the upper sequence is arranged in a rhythmic canon of eleven

rythmic values in increasing order. The lower sequence is arranged in a similar rhythm with the only difference that a semiquaver is added to each note value, creating a rhythmical 'canon by augmentation'. Despite the strictly defined harmonic and rhythmic components, the complex canon arrangement brings about an ever-varying musical structure. In slow tempo this is particularly notable, and the association between the structural layout of these sections, and the thematic idea of the song is evident. Bruhn points to this correspondence, when stating that Messiaen's "chordal and rhythmic sequences of superhuman complexity seems to come from a realm in the beyond, from 'the dark' where the lovers are hopefully united beyond death" (Bruhn:163).

After the third and final instrumental sequences, the vocal line breaks in with the poetic phrase "mon amour, mon souffle." The vocal declaration appears as a striking contrast to its instrumental-musical context. The harmonized melody is marked *fff*, while the accompanying descending piano passage is marked *pp*. This creates a spacious dimension to the musical expression, reflecting the vast distance between the lovers. The phrase appears moreover as a distant echo of previous climax points of movement 7 and 9. Messiaen utilizes a similar harmonic means as he transposes mode 2¹ to 2³ and hence introducing a new shade of colour. As in the previous movements, the phrase tends towards the sub-dominant, A^b. The vocal phrase is also thematically connected to previous movements, as the phrase "ombre partagée, étoile enchaînée" of movement 2 and 7, are set to an identical melodic formula. In this way, Messiaen subtly links the idea of the lovers' unity, symbolized by the former image, with this movement's image of a divine union.

However, it is evident that this phrase represents a turning point of the movement. Messiaen described the phrase simply as the "cry which summarizes the complete work" (Traité:315).²⁹ With this exclamation we are led into the final coda, presenting material from previous movements. It begins with the main theme of movement 8, as well as some textual key phrases: "le chiffre cinq à toi," "la violette double, doublera" and "tout bas, très loin." The latter expression, accompanied by the persistently descending chordal passage, leads to the ending bars of the song. The entire passage is derived from mode 2₁. It repeats the cadential phrase B⁹– E^b five times in all, and these reiterated D-T cadences partake in a steady progression towards the composition's final chord. The accompanying descending piano

²⁹ *Ce cri resume toute l'oeuvre.*

passage ultimately reaches its bottom notes. Then, quite unexpectedly, the first phrase of the opening movement; “la ville qui dormait,” recurs:

Figure 22: Movement 12, final bars

The musical score for Movement 12, final bars, is presented in French. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked 'Extrêmement lent, en rêve' and 'Très lent'. The dynamics range from 'ppp' to 'pppp'. The lyrics are 'La vil - le qui dor - mait...'. The score ends with a long note marked '(très long)'. The piano part features a complex, layered texture with many notes, creating a dreamlike atmosphere. The vocal line is sparse, with long intervals between notes. The overall mood is ethereal and contemplative.

It has been mentioned previously how this arrangement of relating the opening and the ending phrase fulfills the symmetrical plan of the composition. It also suggests the thematic idea that the lovers recall joyous moments of the past. Messiaen’s score indication, “en rêve” – “as a dream” also suggests this. Overall, the concluding bars of *Harawi* points to an existence of another world. Several musical devices reflect this expressive quality: The dynamic range from *pp* to *pppp* and the extremely slow tempo, creates an ethereal atmosphere. The melodic phrase concludes on the third rather than the tonic, leaving the melodic phrase unconcluded. Ultimately, the way in which the very last word of the phrase, *toi*, remains unpronounced, is significant. The singer literally closes her mouth and hums the last notes. The song, as well as the complete song cycle seems to end without finality, as if pointing to the realms of eternity.

5.3. Surrealist poetry – surrealist music?

Messiaen’s strong, yet ambivalent relationship with the Surrealist movement has been addressed in earlier chapter. In the following analyses, the text-music relationship of his songs will be examined in light of this influence. His affinities with surrealism applied primarily to his poetry: “I am some sort of surrealist in my poems, if not in my music,” he claimed (Messiaen in Gavoty:36). It was, however, an artwork, which represented the direct connection between surrealism and *Harawi*: the painting “Seeing is believing” by the British

Surrealist artist Sir Roland Penrose.³⁰ Messiaen knew the painting only from a reproduction of it, but was captivated by its dreamlike motif. Under a starlit sky, we see an island with a village. A woman's head turned upside down, is placed above the village, her hair covering the island and her neck extending into the sky. A pair of hands reaches towards her head from beneath. The symbolism of the painting and its relation to the Tristan myth is obvious: The positioning of the woman's head between earth and heaven, illustrates that she belongs to this world, as well as being divine. Idealized and non-consumed love, is symbolized by the hands that reach out for her. Messiaen was taken by the double meaning of Penrose's painting, and throughout the twelve poems there are allusions to the motif. The town is the setting for the opening and final movement, "La ville qui dormait." References to hands, head, eyes, stars and the sky occur throughout the twelve poems. The influence is particularly explicit in the tenth song, "L'amour oiseau d'étoile." As Penrose's painting illustrates, the capability of capturing abstract ideas in powerful images was unique in surrealist art. Contrasting images were often juxtaposed. Surrealist artists embraced inconsistency and chaos, and this was born out of Breton's ideas of uniting dream and reality to produce "an absolute reality, a surreality." This artistic approach correlated strongly with Messiaen's visionary thinking. A number of specific images, which occur frequently in Surrealist art, appear likewise in Messiaen's works.

The specific motif in Penrose's painting, as well as the visionary ideas of Surrealism, influenced Harawi's poems strongly. The poems were, however, created as part of a broader musical structure, and considering that text and music influence each other mutually, and Messiaen's characterization of himself as solely a Surrealist poet, gives rise to several intriguing questions. If the poems can be described as surrealistic, how then does the music relate to its surrealistic imagery? Are Messiaen's elaborated musical techniques compatible with the spontaneous approaches of Surrealism? How can surrealistic ideas be expressed musically? Sandrow argues that music ought to be the perfect surrealist form: "Music refers solely to the universe of the individual's art experience. The conventional distinction between content and form cannot be applied to it. Music's unsuitability to function as a vehicle of intellection and its property of seeming to touch universals which elude logical verbalization seem to confirm surrealism's affinity with it" (Sandrow:53).

³⁰ Sir Roland Penrose (1900-1984), British painter. The painting has the double title *Seeing is believing* and *L'île invisible*. The motif is shown at the 4th page of the thesis.

This chapter sets out to examine the text-music relationship by addressing these questions, and I have selected examples of characteristic images common for surrealist art and Messiaen's poetry, as starting points for the analysis.

5.3.1. The immobile eye - analysis of "La ville qui dormait"

Messiaen's music associates strongly with the idea of vision. This is reflected in the titles of several works, such as *Visions de l'amen* and *Vingt regards*, and he described *Harawi* likewise, as *Visions of love – Regards d'amour*. Words related to vision appear frequently in *Harawi*'s poems, and the image of an eye occurs recurrently, often in peculiar combinations: "your eye which sings," or "your present eye which breaths." This imagery associates strongly with Surrealist symbolism. In Surrealist painting, a single eye was often represented as an object, and it may dominate the entire canvas. The eye metaphor appears also in Surrealist literature; in René Char's poem *Bél édifice et les presentiments*³¹ we hear the lines: "Des yeux purs dans les bois / Cherchent en pleurant la tête habitable." ("Pure eyes in the woods / Search in tears the habitable head.")

The initial song of *Harawi*, "La ville qui dormait," is structured around a similar metaphor. In the last line of the poem, the eye is mentioned in singular form, and it is noticeable how the entire poem seems to point towards this image:

*La ville qui dormait, toi.
Ma main sur ton cœur par toi.
Le plain minuit le banc, toi.
La violette double, toi.
L'œil immobile, sans dénouer ton
Regard, moi.*

*The sleeping town, you.
My hand on your heart by you.
Deep at midnight the bank, you.
The double violet, you.
The motionless eye that does not unravel your
Gaze, me.*

The atmosphere of the poem is tender and contemplative, depicting a peaceful, nocturnal scene. The sleeping town and the bank at midnight can be traced back to Penrose's painting. The poem also has similarities to the opening scene of Debussy's *Pélleas et Mélisande*, a story which Messiaen considered analogous to the Tristan myth (Samuel:30). The phrase "la violette double, toi" represents a link to the musical material, as the colour violet connects to the main mode of the composition, mode 2¹. Overall, the gentle character of the poem blends with the musical line. The tempo of the song is extremely slow, and the dynamics range from *pppp* to *p*, except for a slight crescendo toward *mf* in the last line.

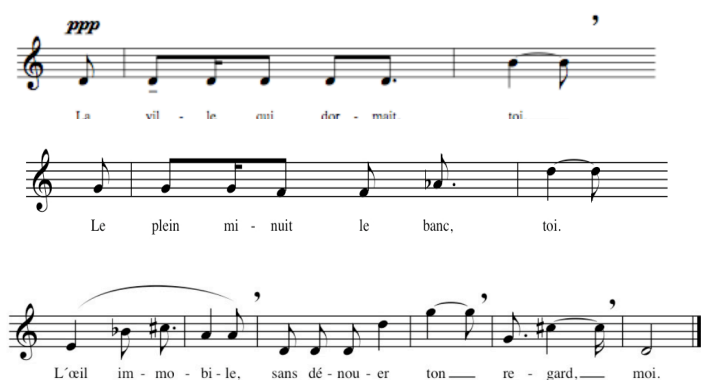
³¹ The poem was set to music by Pierre Boulez in the composition *Le marteau sans maître*.

The verse's finely shaped prosodic pattern, reveals Messiaen's musicality and sense of rhythmic nuances. By means of metric structuring, Messiaen highlights the central image of the last line. Owing to its clarity and surprising turn at the end, the poem resembles a delicate haiku-poem. In the following, we will look at how the poem is structured to highlight its central image.

The first four lines of the poem are composed of seven syllables; they begin unaccented, and end with the word "toi." A strong pattern is then created, and this pattern is interrupted by the considerably longer fifth line. This line begins with an accentuated word, "l'oeil," and ends with the word "moi," creating an end rhyme with the preceding "toi." A pattern occurs by the accentuation of the words "toi" "l'oeil" and "moi," and this triple image corresponds with the final three words of the song, "ton – regard – moi." We see here a textual arrangement that reflects the thematic idea of the song: Tristan and Isolde who see each other for the first time, and fall fatally in love.

The structure of the poem, and thus its thematic idea, is further reflected in the musical line. The five corresponding melodic phrases are naturally divided by pronounced caesuras. The first two phrases are musically identical, whereas the melodic contour changes in the third phrase, which are repeated in the fourth phrase. The fifth phrase is expanded, both in length and tessitura. The melodic phrases are shown in figure 23.

Figure 23: Melodic phrases in mov.1. a) phrase 1,2, b) phrase 3,4, c) phrase 5:



A close association between melodic contours and text can be noticed. Repetitions of one single note relates to the central image of "the unmoving eye," whereas distinct melodic leaps

highlights the key words of the text. The first two phrases end with ascending sixths (D-B), while the next pair of phrases end with tritones (F-Ab-D). Thus, the ending word “toi” is melodically accentuated. The word “l’oeil” of the final phrase is also separated by a tritone. This phrase stands out strikingly, because of its extended tessitura, ranging from D¹ to G². The melodic theme moves in sevenths and octaves, and the last three words, “ton – regard – moi,” are particularly prominent. Caesuras separate each of these words, and the intervallic movements creates a pattern very close to symmetry: falling octave – rising tritone – falling augmented seventh.

The song’s harmonic language appears rich and colourful, and includes tonal, modal and chromatic elements. The opening phrase is set to a chromatic cadential-like chord progression, which concludes on a G⁶ chord:

Figure 24: a) Movement 1, opening bars.

The image shows a musical score for the opening bars of Movement 1. It consists of two staves: a vocal staff and a piano accompaniment staff. The tempo and mood are indicated as 'Extrêmement lent, en rêve'. The dynamics are marked 'ppp' (pianissimo). The vocal line has the lyrics 'La vil - le qui dor - mait, toi.' The piano accompaniment features a chromatic cadential-like chord progression, with chords moving chromatically in the right hand and supporting chords in the left hand. The key signature has one sharp (F#), indicating D major or B minor.

With repetitions of this harmonic phrase, G is established as the tonality of the song. In the fifth phrase, a C⁶ is introduced, creating a strong S-T link with the G⁶. The juxtapositioning of sharp, cluster-like chromatic chords with simple-structured tonal chords is a characteristic feature of the song’s expression, and the major G chords appear as tender and with a sentimental character. Furthermore, this harmonic scheme relates closely to the text, as tonal chords coincide with the three key words, and the slow tempo of the song discloses these harmonic shifts clearly.

Messiaen utilizes further harmonic means to subtly emphasize the central image of the song, “l’oeil immobile.” We have seen how the prosodic pattern of the poem changes when this

expression initiates the last phrase. This change is reflected harmonically, as the last phrase begins in mode 2². Although the phrase is based in G, the mode represents a distinct shift in harmonic colour, thus emphasizing the image of the eye.

Although the opening song of *Harawi* is remarkably short, it contains numerous examples of how Messiaen creates subtle interconnections between harmony and text. Even chord material derived from the previous works, *Visions de l'amen* and *Vingt regards* appear in this phrase, in contracted form. The thematic association between the three compositions, as they all allude to the idea of vision, is thus subtly reflected in the harmonic language (TraitéIII:283).

The opening song of *Harawi* has a distinct expression, with its focus on one particular metaphor, the eye. Messiaen's poetic presentation of the image appeared as highly surrealistic. Yet it blended fully with Messiaen's tonal language, and various musical strategies were applied to elucidate this poetic image. In the following sections, we will look at further examples of common metaphoric links between Surrealism and Messiaen, starting with an examination of how Messiaen represented, metaphorically and musically, the idea of time.

5.3.2. Time embraced - analysis of "L'escalier redit, gestes du soleil"

Henri Bergson's philosophy of time, particularly his notion of experienced time as opposed to structured time, harmonized well with the Surrealists' disregard of order and logic, and these ideas were sought captured in their art. One illustrative example is Dali's image of melting clocks,³² which vividly illustrates the disintegration of measured time. In *Harawi*, we find similar poetic images, such as "the heart of the mad clock." or "ionized laughter fury of clock." However, Messiaen represented concepts of temporality primarily through musical means. His rhythmic techniques, such as isorhythmic motets, palindromes or added values, were effective means to manipulate the sense of on-going time, yet various musical means could be employed for this purpose. These included: repetitive forms, structural units in mosaic patterns, monothematicism, monotonicity, unity of atmosphere, avoidance of conflict, neutralized dissonance or, not the least, extremely slow tempos (Shenton in Dingle and Simeone:174). *Harawi* is a work highly conscious of time, through its focus on the love-

³² Salvador Dali: *The persistence of memory*, 1931.

death subject. This aspect is particularly manifest in movement 9, *L'escalier redit, gestes du soleil*. The movement's use of cyclic material in its middle section was addressed in the last chapter. We will return to this movement, with focus on its imagery, and particularly on how Messiaen's preoccupation with time is expressed.

Through highly surrealistic images, the song communicates the idea that the lovers have become consciously aware of time, yet they are still prisoners of time. The word *time* is the most frequent word of the text, mentioned 14 times, in lines such as: "We sleep far from time in your gaze," and "embrace the time." In Messiaen's song, the abstract concept of time has been objectified. Its central image, "a winding staircase," is also a metaphor of time: "Time is the staircase along which they fall into love and move downward toward their love-death, and as they do so they are described as being 'du temps, du l'eau du ciel'" (Davidson:48).

The stream of images presented in this poem, is associated with the free-flowing dream sequences of surrealistic art. The musical line demonstrates a correspondingly tireless urge. It rarely pauses to dwell on single images, and the song seemd to be shaped as a single, sweeping gesture. The vocal and piano line follow each other closely, and the energetic impetus of the music is indicated in the score: "vif, joyeux et passionné." The musical language is extremely rich, as demonstrated in the analysis of the song's middle section. Here, the opening section of the song will be addressed, a 32 bar long sequence which is repeated at the end.

Figure 25: Movement 9, bar 1:

Vif, joyeux et passionné

Il ne par - le plus,

Vif, joyeux et passionné

mf *molto*

Red. Red. Red. Red.

The opening theme has an assertive character with its constant repetitions of the note B^b (see figure 25). This underscores the forward motion of the music. So does the persistent rhythm, along with the accompanying crescendo passages, that concludes every vocal phrase. The added values on the penultimate note of each phrase bring life into the metric pulse. In the opening phrases, the harmonic language is chromatic, yet in the fourth phrase, mode 2² is introduced to create a brighter tone colour. The initial phrase is built of different appoggiaturas of the “chord of the dominant.” The melodic note A[#]/B^b is supported by a chordal accompaniment based on B. The opening chords are therefore harmonically ambiguous, and may lead to chords in E as well as E^b. After 16 bars, the tension is finally relieved through a descending sixth to E^b, the key tonality of *Harawi*.

Figure 26: Movement 9, bar 12-16

The musical score for Movement 9, bars 12-16, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the first two phrases. The vocal line has lyrics in French: "ver-tes, mau-ves, sur de l'eau. Com-me la mort." The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as "ff", "fff", "p", "mf", and "cresc.". There are also performance instructions like "Red." and "cresc.". The second system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment for the third phrase, with lyrics: "L'œil de l'eau." The piano accompaniment includes dynamic markings such as "f", "p", and "cresc.".

This musical moment coincides with a crucial point in the text, where the image of death is introduced. It also foreshadows the middle part of the song where this image is central, and where it is coupled with the endearments of Isolde: “Death is there, my green dove, death is there, my limpid pearl.” (“La mort est là, la colombe verte, la mort est là, le perle limpide.”)

The poem of the song is organized around a central metaphor, a winding staircase. This image occurs in the very first line depicting a smiling staircase leading to the south: “It no longer speaks, the staircase smiles / each step southward.” (“Il ne parle plus, l’escalier sourit / chaque marche vers le sud.”) The staircase is an image of the lover’s elevation to the light and to timeless eternity, and this idea is supported by various images of the sun: “sun

gestures,” “bright sun,” “sun of joyful cries.” (“gestes du soleil,” “soleil clair,” “le soleil aux cris joyeux.”) The shimmering quality of the accompaniment reflects the image of sun and light. This is held in treble register, and ascending crescendo passages illustrate the image of the elevating staircase.

Despite the seemingly free flow of disparate images, Messiaen arranges the text in a cyclic pattern. The circular movement of a staircase that leads from earth to heaven, is reflected through the triple image of water, time and heaven; “du ciel, du l’eau, du temps.” In a recurring stanza, the word staircase enters into different combinations with this threefold image. Messiaen adopts thus the principle of permutation in this textual arrangement. The poem can be divided into five verses, and a permutational pattern runs through verse 1, 2 and 5, leaving out the middle part of the song, vers 3 and 4. Line three of the first verse reads: “Du ciel, du l’eau, du temps, l’escalier de temps.” If we substitute these expressions by numbers: 1=ciel, temps=2 and eau=3, the following permutational arrangement appears throughout the poem: 1–2–3, 2–3–1, 2–3–1, 3–1–2, 3–1–2, 1–2–3. Furthermore, the last unit of the phrase, e.g. l’escalier du temps, creates a small-scale permutation: 3–1, 1–2, 2–3. In addition each verse ends with the line “L’œil de l’eau” (3), “l’œil du temps” (2) or “l’œil du ciel” (1). A palindromic pattern also occurs in the middle section, verse 4 and 5: 1–3–2, 3–2–1, 1–3–2.

Messiaen described his poetic arrangements as a “play with words” (TraitéIII:304), yet these arrangements also carry symbolic meaning through their association with the central image of a winding staircase. The lines are set to a descending diminished fifth, an interval that symbolizes ambiguity, and thus connects to the love-death material.

Bergson’s novel theories of time-perception and his evaluation of intuition above intellect, served as common ground for Messiaen and the Surrealists, and his ideas affected their art expressions profoundly. In *Harawi*, Messiaen deals with the idea of time within the context of the Tristan myth, and in song 9, Tristan and Isolde become aware of the passing of time, and consequently of their future separation through death. The staircase symbolizes time, as well as connecting earth to the divine. Thus, the surrealistic imagery combined with the fervent passion of the musical line, seems to bring all these dimensions together: “If the ‘staircase’, winding or circular, ascending or descending, is a symbol for time and the agony of life, then life itself is paradoxically also joyful, existence is ecstasy” (Davidson:49). With

this song, the emotional tension of the composition has reached its climax. A dramatic shift of expression is to come.

5.3.3. All the star-birds – analysis of "Amour oiseau d'étoile"

The shift comes with movement 10, which represents a stark contrast to the fervent energy of the previous song. It conveys the image of two lovers who now exist above time, in a state of transcendence. This idea of transcendental, divine love is revealed in the song's title, "Amour oiseau d'étoile," "star-bird of love." The bird had symbolic significance for Messiaen, as he regarded them as messengers between heaven and earth. This link is evident in the song's triangular image. The word love is only mentioned in the title, but transcendental images of stars, heaven and birds characterize the poem of the song:

*Oiseau d'étoile,
Ton œil qui chante,
Vers les étoiles,
Ta tête à l'envers sous le ciel.
Ton œil d'étoile,
Chaînes tombantes,
Vers les étoiles,
Plus court chemin de l'ombre au ciel.
Tous les oiseaux des étoiles,
Loin du tableau mes mains chantent.
Étoile, silence augmenté du ciel.
Mes mains, ton œil, ton cou, le ciel.*

*Bird of the star,
Your singing eye,
Toward the stars,
Your head reversed under the sky.
Your star-eye.
Falling chains,
Toward the stars,
Shortest path from the shadow to the sky.
All the birds of the stars,
Far from the painting, my hands sing.
Star, increased silence of the sky.
My hands, your eye, your neck, heaven.*

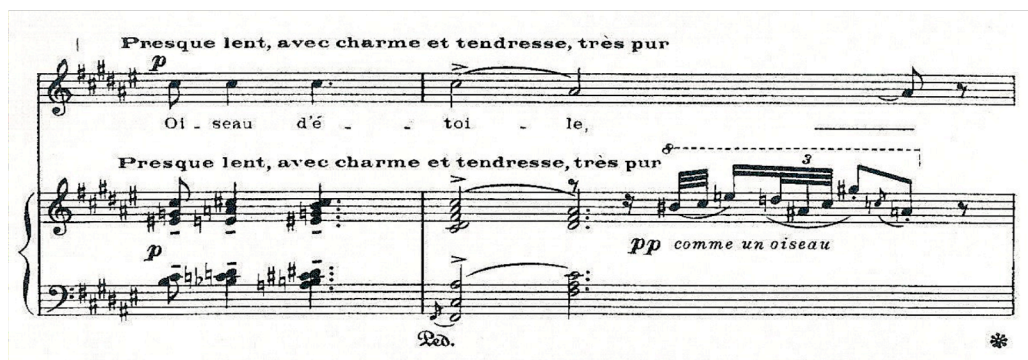
Birdsong was a vital aspect of Messiaen's music, not only as an integrated part of the musical line, but also as a metaphoric element in the poetic expression, conveying symbolic meaning. His affinity with the bird metaphor was shared with the Surrealists. The bird was a recurring motif in Joan Miro's painting and Max Ernst developed a birdlike character in his paintings, which he curiously named Loplop. It was also a frequent motif in the poetry of Éluard and Reverdy. For the Surrealists, the bird signified ultimate freedom. Similarly, Messiaen's employment of bird song elements in his music, with its rhythmic and melodic freedom, added an improvisatory character to his music. The bird image represents thus a strong link between Messiaen and Surrealism. Another connection is the poem's direct description of Penrose's painting:³³ "Your singing eye / Toward the stars / Your head reversed under the sky." ("Ton œil qui chante / Vers les étoiles / Ta tête à l'envers sous le ciel.") The poem's

³³ As described in chapter 4.4.

final line connects directly with the picture, as it points in an upward direction, from earth to heaven: “Mes mains, ton œil, ton cou, le ciel.”

On a musical level, the expression of the song is introverted, and a soft and delicate tonal language accompanies the vocal line. The tempo marking is slow: “presque lent, avec charme et tendresse,” and the gradually augmented note values of the opening phrase add a calming ritardando effect to the musical expression (figure 27):

Figure 27: Movement 10, bar 1-2:



The formal arrangement of recurring phrases adds further to the tranquil expression. The movement is clearly structured in three parts, and each part divides into four phrases. Part one and two are melodically identical. In the last part, Messiaen stretches out the phrases, and expands their melodic range. The entire movement is marked “presque lent, avec charme et tendresse,” and the tonal chords which end each phrase, contributes greatly to the tender expression of the song. Correspondingly, each phrase of the poem ends with soft, open vocal sounds: *étoile, chante, ciel, tombantes*.

As a contrast to the structured patterns of the melodic line, improvisatory bird song motives concludes each phrase. This bird song formula recurs in phrase 1, 2, 4 and, correspondingly, in phrase 5, 6, 8. In addition, bird song ornaments conclude the song. Messiaen often included bird song in his music when the thematic idea involved the concept of silence. In the preface for “Regard de fils sur le fils” from *Vingt regards*, Messiaen described the birds of

this work as “les oiseaux de silence,”³⁴ a pertinent characteristic for this song, with its poetic allusions to silence: “Star, increased silence of the sky.” The main bird motif of the song is associated with chaffinch song. The motif is further elaborated into longer sequences towards the end of the movement, and the bird song embellishments are supported by F^{#6} chords. The song has a clear tonality in F[#], and the melodic lines are mainly circling around the four chordal notes, F[#] – A[#] – C[#] – D[#]. Every phrase is formed as a chromatically elaborated cadence leading to the tonic chord, acting as a firm, harmonic base for the entire movement. Messiaen favoured the chord with added sixth, particularly its first inversion, as he could construct symmetrical patterns of it in a four-part voice. In this song the chord appears in root position. To create a symmetric pattern of this chord, it had to be extended into a multilayered chordal arrangement. In *Harawi*, the tonality of F[#] occurs solely in this movement. In general, however, Messiaen utilized it extensively. When this tonality is combined with mode 2, Messiaen describes it symbolically as the “key of love.” Movements that express transcendental moments of love utilizes this tonality, whether the subject is divine love to God, as in the first movement of *Vingt regards*, or is an expression of extatic moments, as in the Sixth movement of *Turanga-lila*.

A musical language of organic phrases, set to an unwavering harmonic base, accompanies a highly surrealistic image. Are there any elements in Messiaen’s saccharine tonal language, which reflect the striking, surrealistic image of a woman’s head turned upside down? We will address the last part of the song. Here, we find examples of astonishing, yet subtle harmonic progressions within the harmonic phrasing, which may correlate with the unexpected turns of the text. The first instance of this can be noticed in the accompaniment of the line “Loin du tableau mes mains chantent” (see figure 28).

³⁴ “Mystère, rais de lumière dans le nuit_réfraction de la joie, les oiseaux du silence [...]” *Vingt regards*, mov. 5: Regard du fils sur le fils.)

19

mf Loin du ta - bleau mes mains chan - - - tent, *mf*

mf *f* *mf*

mf *f* *mf*

Red. *Red.* *Red.*

pp

dr *dr* *dr*

g *g* *g*

In the following phrase, the anticipated harmonic progression towards the F[#] tonality are further disrupted (see figure 29 on next page). The textual line, "étoile, silence augmenté du ciel," is not overtly surrealistic, but prepares for the final lines which illustrates Penrose's painting directly: "Mes mains, ton œil, ton cou, le ciel." ("My hands, your eye, your neck, heaven.") In the second bar of the phrase, Messiaen omits the F[#] from the tonic chord and substitutes it with F^X, which brings in a new shade of colour and an element of surprise. The anticipated C[#] - F[#] progression is then intervened by a chord which is distantly related to the adjacent chords. The chord is ambivalent, it is enharmonically equivalent with A-minor, yet with added A[#]. A moment of heightened anticipation and uncertainty as to where this phrase leads, is evoked with the entrance of this chord. However, the phrase concludes on an extremely soft-sounding, symmetrical F^{#6} chord. The following bird song passage is extended, as if to highlight this ethereal atmosphere. Ultimately, the song ends in perfect bliss. The poetic line points into eternity, as it alludes to the ascending motion in Penrose's motif. The final word "ciel" is accompanied by an ever-gentle F^{#6} chord, while the bird motif echoes in the treble.

Messiaen's musico-poetic vision of the "star-bird of love," is embedded with silence. The song brings out some wondrous moments, when the surrealistic imagery of the poem converges with the subtle shadings of the harmonic language. These moments recall Breton's praise of the marvelous: "The marvelous is always beautiful [...] in fact only the marvelous is beautiful" (Breton:14). However, the atmosphere of quietness is soon to be wiped out, as the next song introduces a frenetic cosmic dance, evoked by stunningly juxtaposed imagery.

Figure 29: Movement 10, bar 21-22:



5.3.4. Dancing stars, leaping planets – analysis of “Katchi-katchi les étoiles”

Irrational juxtapositions were a common feature of Surrealist art. As Reverdy declared: "The more the relationship between the two juxtaposed realities is distant and true, the stronger the image will be – the greater its emotional power and poetic reality" (Reverdy in Breton:20). Influenced by Freud, the surrealists considered dreams a treasury of outrageous constellations, which could be utilized in their art works. The poems of *Harawi* are clearly influenced by this surrealistic feature with its abundance of strangely combined images. Many of these couple human sensations with elements of cosmic, intangible dimensions, such as: "sun of joyless cries," "gestures of the sun," or "mountain, listen to the solar

confusion of dizziness.” To further emphasize the vast distance between two objects, some surrealists juxtaposed images of small, terrestrial insects with stars and planets, as when Joan Miro depicted both snails and stars in one of his paintings.³⁵ *Harawi*’s 11th song, “Katchi-katchi les étoiles,” presents a comparable image, depicting grasshoppers involved in a planetary dance. This song serves therefore as an ideal example of how this particular surrealistic feature finds its expression through Messiaen’s work.

The cosmic dance was a major theme in the entire *Tristan trilogy*, and the *Turanga-lîla symphony* is to a large extent based on this idea. The Hindu term “lîla” denotes all-embracing joyful play. Besides, Messiaen associated “lîla” with the cosmic play of creation, destruction and reconstruction, as well as the divine play between male and female (Davidson:64). The penultimate song of *Harawi*, anticipates thus the ecstatic expression of the forthcoming symphony, particularly its fifth movement, “Joie du sang des étoiles.” Lacking a large orchestra’s sonic resources, the surrealistic fantasy is here depicted through an interplay between onomatopoeic language, folkloristic rhythms and colourful harmonies.

The image of terrestrial insects involved in a cosmic dance is evoked with the title of the song. The term “katchi-katchi,” is a simplification of the Quechua word for grasshoppers “kaçikaçiça,” and the expression was found in the poem of the Kaswa dance “Mariposaça Ninaça.” The phrase is further employed in the opening lines, in ways which demonstrate how Messiaen emphasizes the sonority of the expression, rather than adhering to its syntactical logic: “Katchikatchi les étoiles Faites - les sauter, Katchikatchi les étoiles Faites - les danser, etc.” The Kaswa dance provides also for the main melodic theme of the song which is formed as a four bar theme with a precedent and antecedent. It resembles the overall song cycle’s main theme, both in melodic contour and by its mode, 2¹. The theme appears at first in the piano introduction, where it is presented in the third octave, superposed by a three-note cluster chord in the subcontra octave (figure 30):

³⁵ Joan Miro: “Étoiles en des sexes d'escargot.” (1925)

Figure 30: Movement 11, opening bars

The musical score for Movement 11, opening bars, is presented in two systems. The first system shows the Chant and Piano parts. The tempo is marked 'Modéré'. The piano part begins with a staccato instruction and a forte (f) dynamic. The vocal part begins with a 'Reo.' (Reverberation) instruction. The piano part features a wide-ranging accompaniment with cluster chords. The vocal part has lyrics: 'Ka-tchi - ka-tchi les é-toi-les,'. The piano part includes a '(poco staccato)' instruction and a '16th' note value.

The wide-ranging accompaniment runs through the entire song, vividly reflecting the surrealistic image of juxtaposing earthbound insects with stars. However, the piano part undergoes a dramatic development throughout the song. The simple structure of the opening part presenting two widely separated lines gradually expands to a complex and sonorous musical texture, all while the theme repeats like a melodic ostinato.

In the opening bars of the accompaniment, the low-pitched cluster chords are arranged as a sequence of diminishing values, from 13 to one 16th notes. This establishes an energetic drive, which is further underscored by the composer's staccato instructions in both piano and vocal voice. When the vocal part begins, additional treble chords are introduced, and from then on, the texture of the piano part thickens gradually. In the second thematic repetition, the vocal line is harmonized in mode 2¹, while appoggiatura figurings fill out the accompanying line. In the third thematic repetition, the accompaniment acts much more independently of the vocal line. Parallel- and counter-movements alternate. Subdivisions of the metric line, creates a more strongly pulsed music, and this reflects the dance aspect of the song.

The poetic expression develops correspondingly. The textual line is now entirely set in French, and it illustrates further the vast distance between cosmos and earth. A subtle allusion to Penrose's painting, depicting the hands and hair of its motif, is noteworthy: "Les nébuleuses spirales / Mains de mes cheveux / Les électrons, fourmis, flèches / Le silence en

deux.” The ensuing lines are clearly influenced by astronomic terminology, listing names of stellar constellations: ”Alpha du Centaure, Bételgeuse, Aldebran / Dilatez l’espace, arce en ciel / Tapageur du temps.” These lines are accompanied by dramatic, undulating appoggiatura passages. In *Traité*, Messiaen compares their layout to Honegger’s style of writing. The harmonic material of these sequences is also employed in *Turanga-lîla*. Messiaen creates thus a link between the two works, thematically as well as harmonically (*Traité*III:312). Ultimately, with the fifth repetition of the theme, the ostinato sequence culminates in dramatic 32th note passages and dynamic glissandi runs. The French text presents images of a rather ferocious character: “Rire ionisé fureur de l’horloge / Au meurtre absent / Coupez ma tête / Son chiffre roule dans le sang!” The accompaniment is correspondingly brutal in its expression. It is initiated by a powerful chordal motif in the bass. The additional parts presents a three-chord pattern, harmonized in mode 2¹, superposed by an ornamental passage in the treble line. This harmonic arrangement is an illustrative example of how Messiaen utilizes resonance effects:

Figure 31: movment 11, bar 21-23

The image displays a musical score for a vocal and piano ensemble, specifically measures 21-23 of movement 11. The score is written in French and includes various musical markings and dynamics. The vocal part is in the upper staff, and the piano accompaniment is in the lower staves. The lyrics are: "Ri.re io.ni.sé fu.reur d'hor.loge au meurtre ab.sent, Coupez ma tête, son chiffre". The score includes markings such as "poco riten.", "a Tempo", "fff brutal", "legato", "stacc.", and "Red." (likely indicating a recording or editing mark). The piano part features complex harmonic structures, including a three-chord pattern in mode 2¹ and dynamic glissandi runs.

After the fifth repetition of the melodic phrase, the vocal material is of a more exclamatory character. The text of this phrase is entirely onomatopoeic, accompanied by sweeping, ascending glissandi. As these passages finally connect the bass and treble register, which was widely separated at the opening of the song, they appear as the song’s climax point. The

accompanying passages of the ensuing coda, are particularly interesting, as they demonstrate Messiaen's skillful adaptation of his material (fig.32).

Figure 32: movement 11: final bars



The lower part of the two-voice pattern is based on the ornamental passage of a previous section of the song. In addition, the pitch sequence of this passage is identical with the “earth theme”³⁶ of movement 6. The glittering passages of this section, contrast sharply to the bass theme of the previous movement. However, it demonstrates Messiaen's ability to transfigure his material, elevating a dark melodic line into radiant passages. Moreover, this musical maneuver seems to reflect the thematic development of the song cycle: the lovers' transcendence from earth towards a divine existence.

Despite the radiant expression of the accompanying line, the text reflects Messiaen's fascination for dark horror. He declared that he was fascinated by that which frightened him and read Shelly's and Poe's ghost stories with ardor. The surrealistic dream landscape of this song is accordingly of a nightmarish sort. The text reiterates the line “roule dans le sang” while the melodic line repeats a fragment of the main theme. A large crescendo points towards the final bar, and the song concludes with a sharp cry on a top note, C³. Superposed with the bass cluster chord of the opening, it restates the wide distance inherent in the song's

image. The song reflects the Surrealist idea of contradictory realities, both through fanciful imagery and through musical means.

The question of whether Messiaen may be described as a surrealist composer, and whether *Harawi* is a surrealist piece of work, is pertinent. To answer the question is not easy, nor interesting, yet to discover surrealist traits in Messiaen's music is a fascinating journey, highly relevant for the text-music issue. These investigations clearly demonstrate how the poems of *Harawi* were influenced by Surrealism. Besides, the musical line manifests numerous surrealist traits, both by surprising twists in the harmonic lines, but also by the way entire sections or movements are sharply juxtaposed. Musical lines are dramatically interrupted and certain movements appear as illogical mosaic arrangements. Music is certainly compatible with Surrealist concepts, and may even be considered an ideal surrealist form of expression. Messiaen was, however, equally drawn to techniques that could unify his miscellany of material into a musically coherent form. Technique, formal patterns and structure were incompatible with the Surrealist project. "Surrealism's joyous embracing of chaos...naturally made alien all classical structure. All art works had to reflect the universal dissolution of structure. Besides, formal patterns were impossible if art works were to emerge as the artist's spontaneous experiences" (Sandrow:49-50). In my view, therein lies the kernel of Messiaen's ambiguity: his use of elaborated techniques, as opposed to instantaneous creative practice. He was surrealist by the way he creatively selected his material, but true to his compositional techniques as he brought it all together in perfectly structured musical works.

My analyses of the surrealist impact on *Harawi*, brings no clear answers to the question. However, Paul Griffiths concludes explicitly, when he compares Surrealism to a practice "where minds could radically be changed by exposure to what is unmediated by good taste. And it is this refusal of good taste, that makes *Harawi* one of the few surrealist masterpieces in music" (Griffiths:128).

5.4. Sounding syllables – Harawi’s onomatopoeic material

“The sonic material of language acquires suggestive powers; linked with a vocabulary that vibrates of associations, the poem opens for a dreamlike eternity.” (Friedrich:52) ³⁷

This chapter will examine the sonic aspect of *Harawi*’s textual line, by focusing on Messiaen’s employment of the ancient Inca language Quechua. This exotic language was highly treasured by Messiaen, and as the expressions did not carry semantic meaning in the same way as a familiar language, the sonic and rhythmic potential of the phrases could be emphasized to a greater extent. The previous chapter examined how Messiaen illustrated the Tristan myth by surrealistic imagery. In fact, the Surrealist influence is highly evident in how Messiaen musicalizes the poetic line by employing onomatopoeic material. Surrealist poetry, and modernistic poetry in general, shows many examples of how phonetic aspects of language were favoured over its semantic meaning.

An influential figure for modernist writers was Stéphane Mallarmé. Mallarmé distinguished between “immediate speech” as it appeared in everyday life, and “essential speech” as it appeared in aesthetic contexts, and “attempted to use words and syllables, free of ‘worn-out, rational meanings’ [...] to affect readers in a non-rational way” (Sandrow:62). Messiaen’s employment of Quechua phrases in *Harawi*, demonstrates a similar attitude toward language. With the onomatopoeic material, the balance between the textual and musical line is strongly altered. As Cone explains, the boundaries between the verbal, the vocal and the instrumental seem to blur. Cone’s theories of the significance of vocal expressions, as briefly outlined in chapter 5.1.1, is therefore particularly relevant for this part of the analysis.

As well as providing Messiaen with musical material, D’Harcourt’s book on Inca folklore was an invaluable source of textual material in form of Inca myths and Quechua poems. This material was exploited to the full, and the Quechua words and syllables that weave through the work, colour the musical expression. The analysis will deal with these onomatopoeic Quechua passages by addressing the following questions: How does Quechua vocabulary act on the total expression of the songs? How does the musical setting of the two languages French and Quechua diverge, and how do the exchanges between French and Quechua

³⁷ Språkets klangmateriale får suggestiv makt; i forening med et ordmateriale som vibrerer av assosiasjoner, åpner diktet adgang til en drømmeaktig evighet. (Friedrich:52)

occur? Finally, how does the employment of onomatopoeic language correspond to the composition's central idea, the Tristan myth?

5.4.1. Doundou tchil

The expressive qualities of *Harawi* range widely, from deep melancholy to states of joy and exultation. Movement 4, "Doundou Tchil," is of the joyous kind, capturing the atmosphere of euphoric folk dance. The musical material of the song is derived from folkloristic dance rhythms, while its lyrics contain several phrases in Quechua. Messiaen derived the title phrase, "Doundou tchil," from a dance song in d'Harcourt's collection, entitled "Quisera, quisera ser danzanito" (Traité III:288), a dance in the style of *Kaswa*. These dances were festive dances, usually performed as part of ritual celebrations. The performers wore ankle bells to accompany their dance, and the expression *dundu çil* appears in the verse of the original dance as a onomatopoeicon, illuding the sound of the bell.

Movement 4 concludes the first section of *Harawi*, by equaling Isolde to the Peruvian dancing girl, and the employment of the phrase "Doundou tchil" evokes the image of her dance. The expression constitutes the sole text material of the 18 bar long opening section, and the phrase is tied to an anapest rhythm on the first beat of each bar, as well as to one single note in a relatively low pitch for a soprano, $c\sharp^1$. The metric, non-melodic regularity of the vocal voice, along with the sharp, hissing sounds of the consonants "d" and "tch," associates with percussive strikes. This illustrates vividly the image of a folkloristic dance scene. The musical examples in figure 33 compares the original dance with the opening of *Harawi*'s 4th movement, and illustrates how Messiaen derived both textual expressions and rhythmic motifs from his source material:

Figure 33 a) *Quisera, quisera ser danzanito*, b) movement 4, bar 3-7:

Bien rythme Cuenca (Écuateur)

mf

Qui-sie - ra, qui-sie - ra, qui-sie - ra ser dan-zan - ti - to con el cas-ca-bel al

pié, Con el cas-ca-bel al pié — Dun - du cil cil cil cil cil cil cil! Pa - ra

bai-lar con mi no-via, Des - de raal a-ma-ne - cer, Dun-du cil, cil cil, cil cil cil cil!

Dou dou tehil. Dou dou tehil.

cresc. Dou dou tehil. Dou dou tehil. Dou dou tehil.

cresc. Dou dou tehil.

The mesmerizing pulse of the vocal voice is set against a perpetually varying rhythm in the accompaniment. Messiaen described the low-pitched rhythmic motifs in the piano part as “bird song in low percussion”³⁸ (Traité III:288). We recognize characteristic features of his bird style, 16th and 32th note figures in big leaps, yet in low register, extending from Ab to C¹. The accompaniment is further influenced by the original Inca dance, and characteristic *Kaswa* rhythms occur throughout. The melody draws on the chromatic scale, although it centers around certain notes and intervals: the bass notes A and Ab, minor and major ninths, (A-Bb og Ab-B), second thirds; (C-D, F#-G# and Ab-B) and the diminished fifth (F#-C).

³⁸ Chant d’oiseau en percussion grave.

The rhythmic drive and forward motion of this movement is further enhanced by the accumulative crescendo that runs through the entire passage. Towards the end of the passage, the intervals of the piano part extend and the entire section is concluded by a threefold reiteration of the vocal phrase.

This is one illustrative example of how the music evokes the passion of folkloristic dance, by combining metric rhythms with onomatopoeic vocabulary. However, a strong emphasis on regular pulse as we see here, is rare in Messiaen's music. He spoke of himself as a rhythmician and described rhythmic music as "music which scorns repetition, squareness, and equal divisions (Samuel:67). Yet, the tension between different rhythmic principles, intrigued him, similar to the way he combines harmonic principles: "The relationship between metrical and ametrical rhythmic perceptions was – like the accommodation between the modes of limited transposition and tonal harmony – a crucial and abiding concern for Messiaen." (Pople in Hill:37) The rhythmic expression in this song, may be compared with particular rhythmic movements by Stravinsky. Both composers were strongly influenced by non-Western folk music, and both made considerable use of percussive effects. However, the resemblance between these two composers exists only to a certain point, asserts Paul Griffiths (Griffiths:17). While Stravinsky's music often is strongly pulsed, Messiaen emphasizes a regular pulse of the music only "when his concern is with the imperfection that separates man from the eternal, unchanging divinity" (ibid).

The folkloristic dance expressions of *Harawi*, have thus not only rhythmical, but also thematic significance. In ritual dance of ancient folk cultures the primary aim was to achieve a state of trance. The experience of the timeless moment was primary. Similarly, the main purpose of Messiaen's music is to step out of the progress of time, in order to access the divine. Messiaen's treatment of Peruvian folklore, particularly the dance rhythms and the incantatory passages in an exotic language, enhances the expression of timelessness and enchantment. To quote Griffiths further: "The capacity to speak of God comes only when the march of time is forgotten, as it is forgotten in plainsong, in a very few composers within but beyond the central tradition and in a great deal of music from other cultures where the main purpose of music may be to address the divine" (ibid).

In Messiaen's song, the evocative opening dance represents one of three sections of material. These are arranged symmetrically:

A:Quechua – B:instr. interlude – C:French – D:Quechua – C:French – B:instr. interlude – A:Quechua.

All sections are sharply juxtaposed. A high-pitched piano passage with a sharp and crystalline sound, connects part A and B. The alternations between French and Quechua are correspondingly clear-cut. Section A and C are based on Quechua text, while section B presents a verse in French: "Piroutcha te voilà, o mon amoi / La danse des etoiles, doundou tchil / Miroir d'oiseau familier, doundou tchil / Arc en ciel, mon souffle, mon écho / Ton regard est revenu, tchil, tchil / Piroutcha te voilà, o mon amoi / Mon fruit léger dans la lumiere, doundou tchil." ("Piroutcha, here you are / dance of the stars / doundou tchil / mirror of familiar birds / rainbow, my echo, my breath. / Your gaze has returned, tchil, tchil / Piroutcha, here you are, o my mine / my weightless fruit in the light.") Imagery of the French verse is reflected in the music, as where Messiaen adds an additional treble part of thrilling bird song motifs in the A section reprise. This creates a stunning contrast to the low-pitched accompaniment and reflects the song cycle's underlying idea of the contradiction between love and death. The verse is also essential as it introduces the Peruvian analogue of Isolde, Piroutcha, for the first time. As exemplified earlier, the verse juxtaposes cosmic images with human senses. The mentioning of breath and gaze alludes to the dance scene. Thus, the idea of a cosmic dance is introduced. The expression "doundou tchil" concludes the French phrases, adding further to the dance atmosphere.

The melodic line, accompanying the French verse, is based on a second Peruvian folk dance, *Khacampa* (d'Harcourt:114). The resemblance between the Peruvian theme and its derivation in *Harawi* is apparent. Messiaen changes the 2/4 pulse of the original theme by adding one 16th value to each rhythmic unit. Although the regularity of the pulse is upset, the perpetual movement of the musical line, keeps up the rhythmic impetus. The Quechua elements bring vigour to the French phrase. Fig. 34 illustrates how the onomatopoetic expressions are highlighted by the rhythmic arrangement. A regular 4/8+5/8 pattern runs through the entire section, but is interjected by a 3/8+3/8 measure, concurrently with the Quechua phrase:

Figure 34, *Doundou tchil*, bar 22-27:

The musical score for 'Doundou tchil' bars 22-27 is presented in two systems. The first system shows the vocal line with the lyrics 'Pi-rou - tchate voi-là, ô mon à - moi, la dan - se des é - toi - les,' and the piano accompaniment marked 'Modéré' and 'mf staccato, un peu louré, comme des cors'. The second system continues the vocal line with 'doun.dou tchil. Pi-rou - tcha te voi-là, ô mon à - moi,' and the piano accompaniment. The score is written in a key with two flats and a 3/4 time signature.

Section C of the song has a more introvert atmosphere. The score calls for the character of a cradle song, and both musical and poetic elements add to the soothing character. The text is exclusively in Quechua, and it is indicative that non-semantic vocabulary is employed for this expression. In cradle songs, the meaning of the words is of less importance. It is rather their gentle and quieting qualities, and the way they are sung, which are essential. The poetic verse consists of various onomatopoeic expressions: “toungo, mapa, nama, kahipipas, mahipipas.” The phrase “tougou” illustrates dove’s cooing, hence pointing to the key image of the composition, the green dove. The words “kahipipas, mahipipas” translate “here and there,” an expression which is further employed in song 8. The words “mapa, nama” seem as derivations of “mahipipas.”

The soft phonetic quality of these phrases is characteristic. The consonants *m*, *n* and *ng* predominate. As in the opening section of the song, the vocal voice acts within a narrow melodic range of four steps. The phrase “kahipipas, mahipipas” is set to an ascending and descending tritone; otherwise the melodic line moves stepwise. The intimate atmosphere conveyed through the sound of the words, is further reflected by the high register of the piano accompaniment, ranging from F^{#1} to F^{b4}.

The sharp chromaticism of the foregoing section is left in favour of modal harmonies. The piano accompaniment presents two harmonic sequences. The upper chord row is harmonized in modus 6⁶, arranged as a succession of mainly major and minor chords in root position. E_b is clearly defined as a tonic, and the final chords echo the harmonies of the structuring theme, E^b – A – E^b. The lower part adheres to mode 4⁶ with the tonic B. The four chords of this sequence have a more complex structure with major sevenths as the main interval. The combination of the two modes provides for a rich pitch selection, and these two chord sequences repeats through the entire section.

Figure 35: movement 4, bar 38-43

Même mouvement, berceur

Toun - - gou, toun - - gou, ma - - pa, na - ma, ma - - pa, na - - ma, ma - - pa, kahi - - pi - pas.

Même mouvement, berceur

p

Both sequences are set to a rhythmic line based on three Hindu rhythms from the Indian *Deçi-tâla*, râgavardhana, candrakalâ and lakskmiça (TraitéIII:289). The sequences are arranged in canon, creating a line of constantly varying harmonies, and this rhythmic and harmonic scheme serves as a foretaste of the expansive canons in later movements.

These three extracts from thavane dance movement "Doundou tchil" exemplify how the onomatopoeic vocabulary enhances the musical expression of the song, whether it accentuates a rhythmic expression or merge with a soothing lullaby. A vocal line based on repetitive or stepwise melodic patterns, reminiscent of a percussive expression, is a general characteristic of the song's Quechua passages.

Movement 6, "Répétition planétaire," utilizes similar onomatopoeic vocabulary as movement 4, yet in a different musical context. The following section addresses this song.

5.4.2. Répétition planétaire

The intensity of expression escalates gradually throughout *Harawi*, and in movement 6 the expression fluctuates between a stormy and an introspective expression, reflecting great emotional turbulence. The title of the song, "Répétition planétaire," reflects the idea of a perpetual succession of life and death, creation and destruction. Its imagery includes wheeling planets, whirlpools and "cries which echoes in time." The overall atmosphere of the poem is dark, focusing on the colours red and black, a colour combination that occurs also in movement 3. Cosmos and earth are contrasted, and this is reflected in the music by its large tessituristic range, and through melodic themes in low register.

The movement opens strikingly with explosive arpeggio piano chords, immediately followed by savage cries in the soprano voice; "a primitive cry in the manner of Tarzan," suggests Messiaen (*Traité*III:292). The cry is repeated four times, each time with diminishing note values, conveying a sense of urgent despair (see figure 36):

Figure 36, Movement 6, opening bars:

Then follows a longer section in the piano part, consisting of three repetitions of a double note sequence in the upper part and filigree-like movements in the lower part. This serves as a background for the next outburst from the singer; melisma passages in the vocal line that associate with primal yodel song. The score's vocal advice says: *À pleine voix, un peu faux, comme un appel en forêt*. The harmonic language is totally chromatic, yet with a central pitch. A prolonged C functions as a departure- and arrival point for the vocal yodel-like passage, and this note has similarly a structuring function in the piano-part. In the lower part of the accompaniment, a C occurs five times, in diminishing note values (5-4-3-2-1), while the interjecting notes increase in number (5-9-16-29). The recurring C's create an underlying structure, which counterbalances the wild and primitive vocal outbursts and the non-tonality of the accompanying line.

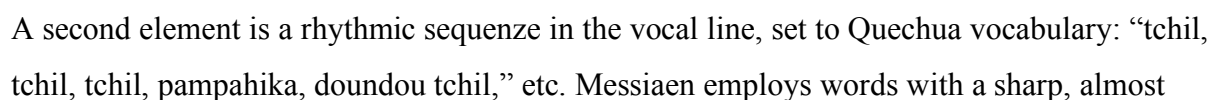
The opening of this movement demonstrates how primitivistic elements, derived from folklore, create a powerful expression, particularly in a vocal setting of this kind. Although *Harawi* is composed in a lied format, the singer will in this song have to abandon classical use of the voice to create a rough, primitive expression.³⁹

The following section presents a sharp contrast to the initial outburst, conveying a mystic atmosphere of ritualistic incantation. It consists of the onomatopoeic text material of movement 4, combined with elements from Sanskrit vocabulary. "mapa, nama, lila, tchil, mika, pamphika." The word "lila" is the Sanskrit word for play, and the words "mapa, nama"

³⁹ According to the soprano Sigune von Osten who performed the songs with Yvonne Loriod, Messiaen generally preferred a natural folkloristic vocal style for *Harawi*. (Lecture-recital at the Messiaen conference, Birmingham, June 2008)

The bass voice of the piano has the leading part through the entire section. It has a dark and sonorous timbre, as Messiaen indicates: “dark and deep timbre, as a bass clarinette.”⁴⁰ Its main theme begins and ends on an ornamented E^b, the composition’s tonic, and is repeated three times. Then the thematic line is elaborated further, until it comes to a halt on a low C₄. The middle layer presents slowly undulating passages consisting of double notes in quavers. The lines are clearly separated by different dynamics; the lower line is marked *f*, while the middle line’s dynamics range from *pp* to *p*. The vocal upper line is set to a relatively low pitch, E¹. As in movement 4, it blends in with the musical line, and fills an accompanying role within the total musical structure.

Figure 37



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staccato character, and these are combined with subtle accentuations in the piano parts, creating a three-part rhythmic play:

Figure 38: *Répétition planétaire*, bar 67-74:

The melodic formulas of the middle voice make up a third layer in the musical structure. This material has a central function, as the leading melodic line of the ensuing vocal passages. From now on, the text alternates between a French verse and syllabic phrases. Again, we notice that onomatopoeic text corresponds to a single pitched vocal line, while the French text demands a wider melodic contour. These two elements alternate in an escalating sequence, which leads towards a final cry:

*Enfourche un cri noir,
Écho noir de temps,
Cry d'avant la terre à tout moment,
Écho noir de temps,
Escalier tournant.
Tourbillon, étoile rouge, tourbillon,
Planète mange en tournant.
Tchil, tchil, tchil pampahika.
Tchil, tchil, tchil pampahikama.
Doundou tchil tchil tchil
Enfourche un cri noir, etc.
Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! O!*

*Mount a black cry,
Black echo of time,
Cry from anytime before the earth,
Black echo of time,
Winding staircase,
Vortex, red star, vortex,
Planet consumes in turning.
Tchil, tchil, tchil pampahika.
Tchil, tchil, tchil pampahikama.
Doundou tchil tchil tchil
Mount a black cry, etc.
Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! O!*

The French poem displays striking imagery. However, the phonetic qualities of the verse are also significant, and Messiaen's employment of alliteration is evident. Two main strands of sonic associations occur: "enfourche – écho – escalier – étoile," and "temps – terre – tout –

tourbillon - tournant.” The repetitions of the words “cri” and “noir” are also noteworthy. These patterns of sonorities heighten the rhythmical energy of the phrase. The layered musical structure with its constant motivic shifts, diminution of note values towards the end, as well as accelerating repetitions of the phrase “mange en tournant,” all adds to the rhythmic impetus of this section.

The song exemplifies how various means of musical and textual structuring reflects a poetic image of the lovers in the midst of the vertigo of wheeling planets, culminating in a resounding jungle cry. It also demonstrates how the musical potential of the text are brought into play in order to create an integrated textual-musical expression. In the last example of the analysis, “Syllabes,” onomatopoeic material serves entirely as a musical component of the song’s expression.

5.4.3. Syllabes

In *Harawi*, reiterations of short textual phrases are turned into extensive passages of music, as demonstrated in a previous section. Messiaen takes this practice a step further in the song “Syllabes.” The term “pia” constitutes the main text material, amounting to 275 times throughout the text. Incessant repetitions of one single word in rapid and accelerating tempo, distinguish the song’s general expression, yet these onomatopoeic sequences have no apparent semantic meaning. However, they vividly illustrate the tension and agony felt by the lovers when they realize their forthcoming separation, as Goléa suggests: “These syllables, for the poet-musician, is sacred signs. They are the result of the elevation of love and of the despair that it engenders. They are, by their physiological effects, the glottis, the vocal chords, the tongue, the lips, the cries, the high screams from the soul, hurt by death which is caused by the fire of passion and the necessity of separation”⁴¹ (Golea:165).

The song connects closely to the Tristan myth by illustrating Brangäne’s warning Alba,⁴² as mentioned previously. At dawn, Isolde’s confidant Brangäne warns the lovers to part, and thus keep their love hidden from the king. The syllabic passages of the song, is influenced by various folkloristic legends analogous of the Celtic story. An Andean myth tells of monkeys

⁴¹ Et puis, ces syllabes, ce sont, pour le poète-musicien, des signes sacrés. Ce sont les résultats de la montée de l’amour et du désespoir qu’elle engendre. Ce sont, sous la forme d’effets physiologiques, de la glotte, des cordes vocales, de la langue, des lèvres, les cris, les hurlements aigus de l’âme blessée à mort par le feu de la passion et la nécessité de la separation.

⁴²An Alba was a medieval morning song, where a confidant warns the lovers the approach of a jealous husband.

passing a cry from animal to animal to warn an Inca prince of danger and thereby saving his life (Davidson:43). Correspondingly, in the Sankrit epic *Ramayana*, a monkey army rescued princess Sita from a demon king (Bruhn:169). In *Traité*, Messiaen refers to a Balinese ritual dance, performed in memory of the Hindu monkey army. The performers, seated in a circle, were passing a syllable between them in accelerating tempo. The original syllable was “çak,” whereas Messiaen translated it into “pia” (*Traité*III:280). These “parlando” repetitions, illustrating the sonic image of monkey cries, are truly demanding for the singer, and she appears more as an instrumentalist than a vocalist. The score indication calls for a vocal use that is: “Presque parlé, très sec, en faisant, claquer chaque syllabe.” The sequences are, however, occasionally interspersed with the phrase “doundou tchil,” followed by a quaver long pause, which allows short in-breaths for the singer. The vocal pauses coincide with low cluster chords in the accompaniment (see figure 39):

Figure 39: Movement 8, bar 93-94:

The image displays a musical score for two systems, each consisting of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The tempo/mood is indicated as "Modéré, un peu vif". The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The time signature is 4/4. The score is marked with "ff" (fortissimo) and includes dynamic markings like "Red." (redacted) and "mf (simile)". The vocal line features a series of eighth notes, each followed by the syllable "pia". The piano accompaniment consists of dense, complex chords, often with clusters, that change frequently to provide different timbres for each "pia" syllable. The first system ends with a double bar line and a repeat sign. The second system continues the pattern, with the vocal line marked "mf (simile)".

The Balinese ritual of passing a syllable between several performers, engendered varying timbres for each syllable. These variations are provided for in the chordal accompaniment, as Messiaen explains: “The different timbre which then affects each syllable is here responding

in each accompanying chord”⁴³ (TraitéIII:280). In general, all chords are based on chromaticism, and they are often arranged in closed structures. Seconds and tritones are their predominate intervals. Short motifs of two or three chords are frequently repeated. Ascending or descending passages in the base, add energy and supports the vocal line.

To produce a rich harmonic sound, Messiaen draws on various sources. As we have seen exemplified previously, chordal material is shared between various movements. In this section, we recognize harmonic material derived from song 1, 5 and 6 (TraitéIII:302). The passages just described make a considerable impression on the listener with their flavour of strange exoticism. Another characteristic feature of the song is how diverging expressions are juxtaposed. French and Quechua phrases alternate strikingly, and these transitions are often pointed out further by musical means.

To elucidate this aspect, a presentation of the movement’s overall layout, is required. The song is composed of four thematic components, each with a unique expressive quality. These are arranged in a form similar to the rondo, represented as: A-B-C-D-A-B-C-D-A-D. Section A is omitted at the end, so that the characteristic “pia” passages conclude the song. The opening section presents a melodic theme of extreme lyricism, in sharp contrast to the fervent, onomatopoeic phrases. Its melodic line is a transcription of a native *Harawi* of Equadorian origin, entitled “Tristezas.” Messiaen denotes his version as a second “Thème d’amour” (Figure 40).

⁴³ “Les différents timbres ainsi affectés à chaque syllabe sont rendus ici par les différents accords du piano.”

Figure 40: a) “Tikata tarpuinikiçu” (d’Harcourt), b) opening theme of “Syllabes”

*Figure 40a: Musical score for “Tikata tarpuinikiçu” (d’Harcourt). The score is in 3/8 time, marked *mf* and *♩ = 104*. It consists of three staves of music with lyrics in French and English. The lyrics are: Ti - ka - ta tar - pui - ni - ki - çu, Kay - pi - pas, May - pi - pas, Ma-na-rak - pa-ra-ça - yaç kap - tin, Kay - pi - pas, May - pi - pas, No - kam i - ça - ka - tar - pui-man, Kay-pi - pas, may-pi - pas, War-ma wek-key-wan par-kus - pay, Kay-pi - pas, may-pi - pas.*

*Figure 40b: Musical score for the opening theme of “Syllabes”. The score is in 4/4 time, marked *Très modéré* and *p très expressif*. It consists of two staves of music with lyrics in French and English. The lyrics are: Co - lom - be, co - lom - be ver - te, Le chif - fre cinq à toi, La vio - let - te dou - ble dou - ble - ra, Très loin, tout bas.*

The poem of the opening theme is central, as the expression appears also in the song cycle’s first and last song. The mentioning of the green dove relates to the structuring material of the composition:

*Colombe, colombe verte
Le chiffre cinq à toi
La violette double doublera,
Très loin tout bas.*

*Dove, green dove,
The figure five is yours,
The double violet will double again
Very far very low.*

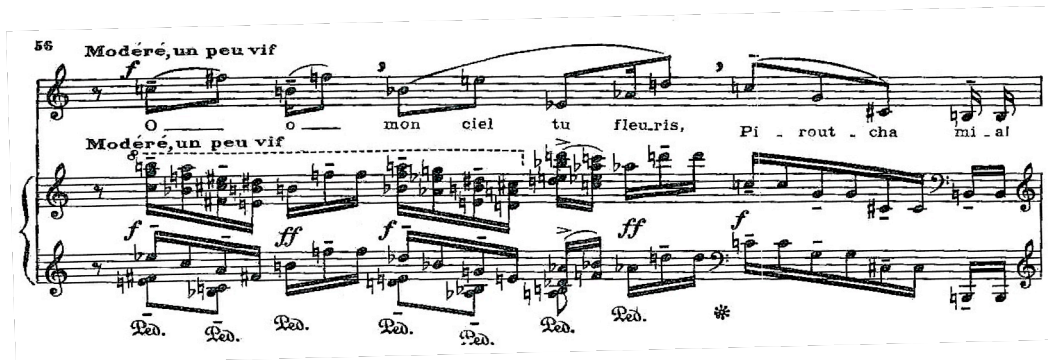
Section B describes Piroutcha in images of bloom and the celestial:

*O o mon ciel tu fleuris
Piroutcha mia!
O o dépilons du ciel,
Piroutcha mia!
O o fleurissons de l’eau
Piroutcha mia!*

*O o my heaven you bloom,
Piroutcha mia!
O, o let us take down some heaven
Piroutcha mia!
O, o let us bloom below water,
Piroutcha mia!*

To accompany this text, an identical melodic phrase is repeated three times. Intervallic leaps of the tritone predominate the melodic line:

Figure 41, movement 8, bar 10



The tritone interval characterizes likewise the melodic and harmonic material of the next section, which is constructed around the Quechua phrase “kahipipas, mahipipas.” The expression was previously utilized in the song “Doundou tchil” and is derived from the Peruvian yaravi, “Tikata tarpuinikiçu,” shown above. The phrase’s connotation “here and there” has been mentioned. However, Messiaen sets the literal sense of the phrase aside. Instead, he incorporates it in the symmetrical structure of the music and creates a mirroring effect as the phrase repeats. “Kahipipas, mahipipas” turns into “pipaskahi, pipasmahi.” A corresponding pattern appears in the rhythmic scheme of the accompaniment. A cell of chords initiates each vocal phrase, and their increase and decrease in number create the symmetric pattern, 1-2-3-4-3-2-1 (see figure 42). In the second repetition of section C a small-scale palindrome is added, as the word “pipas” repeats five times.

Figure 42: Movement 8, bar 13-16

These textual phrases prepare for the following “pia” passages, by its successive diminution of syllables: “kahipipas - pipas - pia, pia, pia, etc.” This textual arrangement emphasizes also the forward impulse of the musical expression.

The transitions between French and Quechua sequences were pointed out as a particular characteristic of *Harawi*, and as a feature of a surrealistic expression. We will now look specifically at the passage from the main, melodic theme to the extensive syllabic sections toward the end. As we have seen, the French verse concludes with the line “Le chiffre cinq à toi.” In this instance, however, the final word is omitted and replaced by a tirade of syllables, creating the truly bewildering phrase, “Le chiffre cinq àpia, pia, pia.”

Figure 43: Movement 8, bar 71-74:

The number five is significant in many dimensions of Messiaen's music. At the symbolic level, it signifies the "victory of death." The number relates to the Hindu god Shiva,⁴⁴ as well as being identified as a Christian symbol of suffering, and this cross-cultural analogy fascinated Messiaen (Bruhn:230). With its inherent symmetry, the number five functions as a structuring device in many of Messiaen's compositions. In *Vingt regards* and *Turanga-lila* every fifth movement present key themes. Messiaen refrained from interpreting this phrase in *Harawi*. What does the phrase implies? In my view, its significance is to be found in its sonority. The phrase has no syntactic sense, yet through an excessive use of a single syllable, it is highly expressive, conveying its meaning through the lack of a logic wording. Why then does he arrange the sequence as a vocal phrase? Could he have composed a purely instrumental passage with the same effect? Edward Cone addresses these questions, when claiming that:

[...] the human voice occupies a special position among musical instruments. As human beings, we recognize the voice as belonging to one of us, and we accord it special attention. A violin or a clarinet, despite its singing power, can be dominated, hidden, or superseded by other instruments. It is possible to treat the voice in this fashion, but the result is that it almost inevitably sounds abused. For when the voice sings, it demands to be heard, and when it is heard, it demands recognition (Cone:79).

According to Cone, a vocal expression is significantly different from other musical instruments, and therefore, it carries special meaning, even when it is speechless. Messiaen seems to play with our expectations of unambiguous messages. In *Harawi*, a sense of tension between semantic meaning and non-logic syllabic sounds, or between the familiar and the unknown, is perceived. Cone speaks of the latent potential for meaning in unarticulated verbal expressions:

"We cannot help interpreting the vocalizer; not as the player of a wordless instrument, but as a protagonist who has deliberately chosen to remain inarticulate. We attribute to his song, the connotations of words, no doubt on the tacit assumption that although his thoughts are not verbally expressed, they nevertheless could be, and at any point might be" (Cone:78).

⁴⁴ Shiva associates with the *lila* and the five cyclical activities that define him: creation, preservation, embodiment, destruction and liberation. The number five corresponds to the five wounds of Christ.

Let us return to the onomatopoeic phrase in “Syllabes.” How does Messiaen conclude the speechless phrase? The sequence is considerably extended in the final episode, and the vocal passage accelerates and increases in dynamics towards the end. Totally unexpectedly, the wild syllabic phrase is interrupted by the phrase “Tout bas,” set to a soft G⁶ harmony. The contrast of expressions could hardly be any larger than this. The phrase is also inexplicable. However, the phrase “tout bas” appears in the final bars of the entire song cycle. It thus foreshadows the final solution of the myth, the lover’s encounter in a divine existence.

The voice demands to be heard, says Cone. Through the mere sound of the voice, and through words which fluctuates between meaning and music, Messiaen communicates the quintessence of one of the greatest myths in music.

6. Conclusion

A long working process has come to an end. In the course of my study, the main questions, by which I approached Messiaen's work, have been exchanged for new ones. Some questions found answers, while others remained unexplored. I will, however, readress my initial questions, and summarize my main findings.

The overall concern of the study was the relationship between text and music in Messiaen's song cycle *Harawi*. To structure my analytical work, I approached the composition by addressing three specific questions:

- How does the musical and the textual material interconnect in order to create a unified structure of the composition?
- In what ways does the surrealistic imagery of the text affect the musical expression?
- Are there correlations in terms of sonic and rhythmic qualities between Messiaen's employment of Quechua language and his musical techniques?

Messiaen's employment of a cyclic theme, as well as other structuring material, was a natural starting point for the analyses. It provided a wide perspective of the entire composition, and demonstrated how Messiaen utilizes his material to create cross-connections between various songs. This occurred both at a poetic and a musical level, and subtle musico-poetic connections were discovered. Relations between *Harawi* and other compositions were also pointed at, and this compositional strategy seems to reflect Messiaen's compositional attitude. All aspects of a musical work are meant to represent a higher vision, and thus a great number of his works seem thematically and musically related.

The analyses of the first chapter (5.1) addressed primarily Messiaen's employment of a cyclic theme, *Thème d'amour*, and its corresponding imagery. The three structuring movements appear similar in form, yet they are set within totally different musical contexts, and this arrangement reflects the thematic development of the composition. In Song 2, the music illustrated the poem mimetically, by imitating textual expressions with ascending or descending passages, or characteristic birdsong motifs. The 7th song elaborated the musical material, which appeared as an expressive element in a more independent manner. In the final song, the musical line seemed to follow its own path, as if released from the poetic line. This

musico-poetic arrangement supported the thematic development of the composition, from earthly joy, via desolation, to a higher transcendent state. The first part of the analysis, addressed also the middle section of movement 9. This song employs the structuring material in highly dramatic and culminative passages, and the connection between the three central movements and the climax point of the entire composition, was pointed out.

The second part considered the surrealistic influence on the songs. The analyses focused on common surrealistic imagery, and on how this appeared in Messiaen's songs. The issue of Messiaen's ambivalent relationship with the Surrealist movement, brings up pertinent questions, in relation to this aspect of my analysis. If his poems can be characterized as surrealistic, what can then be said about his music? There is no doubt that his poems are of a highly surrealistic character. My primary concern was therefore how the surrealist images were reflected in the musical line. In the study of the music, various surrealist qualities were noticed. Messiaen's colourful and often surprising harmonic language, blended subtly with the surrealistic metaphors of the text. Besides, Messiaen's dismissal of logic metricity in his rhythmic techniques, is in line with surrealist thinking. On a formal level, the way some songs are arranged in disjunctive, mosaic patterns, is also a distinct surrealistic characteristic. Why then, was Messiaen ambiguous to Surrealist practice, and why is it problematic to describe Messiaen as a surrealist composer? As the analysis demonstrated, Messiaen's music are coherently structured, as well as being founded on elaborated techniques. The conscious, intellectual approach of Messiaen was alien to the Surrealists. Another reason for Messiaen's ambiguities, could be related to his faith. Surrealists were fundamentally atheistic, believing in the creative resources of the human mind. Messiaen was a true Catholic, believing in a divine existence, and he conveyed his visions through his music.

The final part of the analyses examined Messiaen's use of onomatopoetic language, derived from the ancient Inca language Quechua. By comparing the musical accompaniment of the French verses with onomatopoetic passages, the musical context of the non-semantic passages appear with distinct characteristics. In these sections, the vocal expression is toned down, often in favour of a percussive expression. The textual line becomes part of the entire musical structure. The interplay between meaning and sound, between logic words and nonsense syllables, makes the *Harawi* songs highly ambiguous. By utilizing the sonic potential of the language and pushing it to the border of its semantic meaning, the text

borders between a verbal and a nonverbal expression. However, it is the speechless vocal material that gives these songs its remarkable expression.

Through this investigation into the textual-musical relationship of Messiaen's song cycle, it becomes evident that he intended his music and poetic verse to integrate to one unified expression. His musical line responds closely to the sonorities of the text, and the textual line appears as a musical element, blending seamlessly with the overall structure. The analyses demonstrated further how Messiaen creates a subtle interplay between text and music, in order to create coherence out of a highly diverging material. What else could he have done, than creating his own poetry?

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Appendix 1: Translation of the twelve poems of Harawi⁴⁵

1: La ville qui dormait

*La ville qui dormait, toi.
Ma main sur ton coeur par toi.
Le plain minuit le banc, toi.
La violette double, toi.
L'œil immobile, sans denouer ton
Regard, moi.*

*The sleeping town, you.
My hand on your heart by you.
Deep at midnight the bank, you.
The double violet, you.
The motionless eye that does not unravel your
Gaze, me.*

2. Bonjour toi, colombe verte

*Bonjour toi, colombe verte,
Retour de ciel.
Bonjour toi, perle limpide,
Départ de l'eau.
Étoile enchaînée,
Ombre partagée,
Toi, de fleur, de fruit,
de ciel et d'eau,
Chant des oiseaux.
Bonjour,
D'eau.*

*Good morning to you, green dove,
Return from heaven.
Good morning to you, limpid pearl,
Departure from the water.
Enchained star,
Shared shadow,
You, of flower, of fruit, of heaven and of water
of heaven and of water,
Birdsong,
Good morning,
Of water.*

3. Montagnes

*Rouge-violet, noir sur noir.
L'antique inutile rayon noir.
Montagne, écoute le chaos solaire du vertige.
La pierre agenouillée porte ses maîtres noirs.
En capuchons serrés les sapins se hâtent vers le noir
Gouffre lancé partout dans le vertige.
Noir sur noir.*

*Violet-red, black on black.
The antique, useless black beam.
Mountain, listen to the solar chaos of vertigo.
The kneeling stone carries its black masters.
In tightened hood the fir trees hasten towards the black.
Chasm hurled everywhere in the vertigo.
Black on black.*

⁴⁵ The translations are derived from Bruhn's version. Poem 9 and 10 draws both on Bruhn's and Davidson's translations.

4. Doundou tchil

Doundou tchil, etc.
Piroutcha te voilà, ô mon à-moi,
la danse des étoiles, doundou tchil.
Piroutcha te voilà, ô mon à-moi,
Miroir d'oiseau familier, doundou tchil
Arc-en-ciel, mon souffle, mon echo,
Ton regard est revenu, tchil, tchil.
Piroutcha te voilà, ô mon à-moi,
Mon fruit léger dans la lumière,
doundou tchil.
Toungou, toungou, mapa, nama,
mapa, nama, mapa, kahipipas.
Toungou, toungou, mapa, nama,
mapa, nama, mapa, mahipipas.
Piroutcha te voilà, ô mon à-moi
La danse des étoiles, doundou tchil
Piroutcha te voilà, ô mon à-moi,
Miroir d'oiseau familier, doundou tchil
Arc-en-ciel, mon souffle, mon echo,
ton regard est revenu, tchil, tchil.
Piroutcha te voilà, ô mon à-moi,
Mon fruit léger dans la lumière,
doundou tchil, etc.

Doundou tchil, etc.
Piroutcha, there you are, o my mine,
Dance of the stars, doundou tchil.
Piroutcha, there you are, o my mine
Familiar mirror of bird, doundou tchil.
Rainbow, my breath, my echo,
Your gaze has returned, tchil, tchil
Piroutcha, there you are, o my mine
My weightless fruit in the light,
doundou tchil.
Toungou, toungou, mapa, nama,
mapa, nama, mapa, kahipipas.
Toungou, toungou, mapa, nama,
mapa, nama, mapa, mahipipas.
Piroutcha, there you are, o my mine,
Dance of the stars, doundou tchil,
Piroutcha, there you are, o my mine,
Familiar mirror of bird, doundou tchil.
Rainbow, my breath, my echo,
Your gaze has returned, tchil, tchil
Piroutcha, there you are, o my mine,
My weightless fruit in the light,
doundou tchil, etc.

5. L'amour de Pirouchta

(La jeune fille:)
"Tongou, ahi, toungou,
toungou, berce, toi,
ma cendre des lumières,
berce ta petite en tes bras verts.
Pirouchta, ta petite cendre, pour toi."
(Le jeune homme:)
Ton œil tous les ciels, doundou tchil.
Coupe-moi la tête, doundou tchil.
Nos souffles, nos souffles, bleu et or.
Ahi! Ahi!
Chaines rouges, noires mauves,
amour, la mort."

(The young woman:)
"Tongou, ahi, toungou, toungou
Toungou, rock, you,
my cinder of light,
Rock your little girl in your green arms.
Pirouchta, your little cinder for you."
(The young man:)
"Your eye all heavens, doundou tchil.
Cut off my head, doundou tchil.
Our breaths, our breaths, blue and gold.
Ay! Ay!
Red, black, and mauve chains,
love death."

6: Répétition planétaire

*Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! O!
Mapa, nama, mapa, nama, lila, tchil.
Mapa, nama lila, mika, pamphika.
Tchil, tchil, tchil pampahika.
Enfourche un cri noir,
Écho noir de temps,
Cri d'avant la terre à tout moment,
Écho noir de temps,
Escalier tournant.
Tourbillon, étoile rouge, tourbillon,
Planète mange en tournant.
Tchil, tchil, tchil pampahika.
Tchil, tchil, tchil pampahikama.
Doundou tchil tchil tchil
Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! O!*

*Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! O!
Mapa, nama, mapa, nama, lila, tchil
Mapa, nama lila, mika, pamphika
Tchil, tchil, tchil pampahika
Mount a black cry,
Black echo of time,
Cry from anytime before the earth,
Black echo of time,
Winding staircase,
Vortex, red star, vortex,
Planet consumes in turning.
Tchil, tchil, tchil pampahika.
Tchil, tchil, tchil pampahikama.
Doundou tchil tchil tchil
Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! Ahi! O!*

7. Adieu

*Adieu toi, colombe verte
Ange attristé.
Adieu toi, perle limpide,
Soleil gardien.
Toi, de nuit, de fruit de ciel, de jour,
Aile d'amour.
Adieu toi, lumière neuve,
Philtre à deux voix
Étoile enchaînée,
Ombrée partagée
Dans ma main mon fruit de ciel, de jour
Lointain d'amour.
Adieu toi, mon ciel de terre,
Adieu toi, désert qui pleure,
miroir sans souffle d'amour
De fleur, de nuit, de fruit, de ciel, de jour,
Pour toujours.*

*Farewell to you, green dove
Sorrowful angel.
Farewell to you, limpid pearl,
Guardian sun.
You of night, of fruit, of haven, of day,
Wing of love,
Farewell to you, new light,
Love potion in two voices.
Enchained star,
Shared shadow,
In my hand, my fruit of heaven, of day,
Far away from love.
Farewell to you, my earthly heaven,
Farewell to you, weeping desert,
Mirror without breath of love,
Offlower, of night, of fruit, of heaven, of day,
Forever.*

8. Syllabes

*Colombe,colombe verte
Le chiffre cinq à toi
La violette double doublera,
Très loin tout bas.
O o mon ciel tu fleuris
Piroutcha mia!
O o dépilons du ciel,
Piroutcha mia!
O o fleurissons de l'eau
Piroutcha mia!
Kahipipas, mahipipas, kahipipas
Pia pia pia, doundou tchil, etc.*

*Dove, green dove,
The figure five is yours,
The double violet will double again
Very far very low.
O o my heaven you bloom,
Piroutcha mia!
O, o let us take down some heaven
Piroutcha mia!
O, o let us bloom below water,
Piroutcha mia!
Kahipipas, mahipipas, kahipipas
Pia pia pia, doundou tchil, etc.*

9: L'escalier redit, gestes du soleil

Il ne parle plus, l'escalier sourit,
Chaque marche vers le sud.
Du ciel, de l'eau, du temps, l'escalier du temps
Son oeil est désert, lumière en secret
Pierre Claire et soleil clair
De l'eau, du temps, du ciel, l'escalier du ciel
Ma petite cendre tu es là,
tes tempes vertes, mauves, sur de l'eau
Comme la mort. L'oeil de l'eau

L'escalier redit, gestes de soleil
Couleur de silence neuf.
De l'eau, du temps, du ciel, l'escalier du ciel,
J'attends dans le vert, étoile d'amour.
C'est si simple d'être mort
Du temps, du ciel, de l'eau, l'escalier de l'eau
Ma petite cendre tu es là,
Tes tempes vertes, mauves sur de l'eau
Sur de temps.
Comme la mort. L'oeil du temps.

Du ciel, de l'eau, du temps,
Ton oeil présent qui respire.
De l'eau, du temps, du ciel,
Le cœur de l'horloge folle.
La mort est là, ma colombe verte.
La mort est là, ma perle limpide.
La mort est là.
Nous dormons loin du temps dans ton regard.
Je suis mort.

L'eau dépassera nos têtes,
Soleil gardien.
Le feu mangera nos souffles,
Philtre à deux voix.
Nos regards d'un bout à l'autre
Vus par la mort.
Inventons l'amour du monde
Pour nous chercher, pour nous pleurer,
Pour nous rêver, pour nous trouver.
Du ciel, de l'eau, du temps,
Ton cœur qui bat,
Mon fruit, ma part de ténèbres,
tu es là, toi.
L'amour, la joie!

Le silence est mort, embrasse le temps.
Le soleil aux cris joyeux.
Du temps, du ciel, de l'eau, L'escalier de l'eau.
La gaieté fleurit dans les bras du ciel.
Éventail en chant d'oiseau.
Du ciel, de l'eau, du temps, L'escalier du temps
Ma petite cendre tu es là,
tes tempes vertes, mauves, sur du ciel,
tes tempes sur du ciel.
Comme la mort. L'oeil du ciel.

It no longer speaks, the staircase smiles,
Each step southward.
Of heaven, of water, of time, staircase of time
Its eye is wasteland, light in secret
Clear stone and bright sun.
Of water, of heaven, of time, staircase of heaven
My little cinder, you are there,
Your green, mauve temples, upon water.
Like death. The eye of water.

Staircase retold, gestures of the sun,
Colour of new silence.
Of water, of time, of heaven, staircase of heaven.
I wait in the green, star-studded with love.
It is so easy to be dead.
Of time, of heaven, of water, staircase of water
My little cinder, you are there,
Your green, mauve temples, upon water.
Upon time.
Like death. The eye of time.

Of heaven, of water, of time
Your present eye which breathes
Of water, of time, of heaven,
The heart of the mad clock.
Death is there, my green dove.
Death is there, my limpid pearl.
Death is there.
We sleep far from time in your gaze.
I am dead.

Water shall pass over our heads
Guardian sun.
Fire will consume our breath,
Love potion for two voices.
Our gazes from one end to the other,
Seen by death.
Let us invent the love of the world
To seek ourselves, to weep for ourselves,
To dream of ourselves, to find ourselves.
Heaven, water, time
Your beating heart,
My fruit, my share of darkness,
you are there, you.
Love, joy!

Silence is dead, embrace time.
Sun of joyless cries.
Of time, of heaven, of water, staircase of water.
Gaiety flourishes in the arms of heaven.
Fan of birdsong.
Of heaven, of water, of time, staircase of time.
My little cinder, you are there,
You green, mauve temples, upon heaven,
Your temples upon heaven.
Like death. Eye of heaven.

10. Amour oiseau d'étoile

Oiseau d'étoile,
Ton œil qui chante,
Vers les étoiles,
Ta tête à l'envers sous le ciel.
Ton œil d'étoile,
Chaînes tombantes,
Vers les étoiles,
Plus court chemin de l'ombre au ciel.
Tous les oiseaux des étoiles,
Loin du tableau mes mains chantent.
Étoile, silence augmenté du ciel.
Mes mains, ton œil, ton cou, le ciel.

Bird of the star,
Your singing eye,
Toward the stars,
Your head reversed under the sky.
Your star-eye.
Falling chains,
Toward the stars,
Shortest path from the shadow to the sky.
All the birds of the stars,
Far from the painting, my hands sing.
Star, increased silence of the sky.
My hands, your eye, your neck, heaven.

11. Katchikatchi les étoiles

Katchikatchi les étoiles,
Faites les sauter,
Katchikatchi les étoiles,
Faites les danser,
Katchikatchi les atomes,
Faites les sauter,
Katchikatchi les atomes,
Faites les danser.
Les nébuleuses spirales
Mains de mes cheveux.
Les électrons, fourmis, flèches,
Le silence en deux.
Alpha du Centaure,
Bételgeuse, Aldébaran.
Dilataz l'espace, arc-en-ciel
tapageur du temps,
Rire ionisé fureur de l'horloge
au meurtrier absent,
Coupez ma tête,
Son chiffre roule dans le sang!
Tou, ahi! mané, mani.

Katchikatchi the stars,
Make them leap,
Katchikatchi the stars,
Make them dance,
Katchikatchi the atoms,
Make them leap,
Katchikatchi the atoms,
Make them dance.
Spiral nebulae
Hands of my hair.
Electrons, ants, arrows
Silence halved.
Alpha Centauri,,
Bételgeuse, Aldebaran.
Expand the space, rainbow
Blusterer of time,
Ionized laughter fury of clock
For absent murder,
Chop off my head
Its number rolls in blood!
Tou, ahi! mané, mani.

12. Dans le noir

Dans le noir, colombe verte
Dans le noir, perle limpide.
Dans le noir, mon fruit de ciel, de jour
Lointain d'amour.
Mon amour, mon souffle!
Colombe, colombe verte,
Le chiffre cinq à toi,
La violette double, doublera,
Très loin, tout bas, très loin.
La ville qui dormait...

In the dark, green dove
In the dark, limpid pearl
In the dark, my heavenly fruit, of day
Far from love.
My love, my breath!
Dove, green dove,
The number five for you,
The double violet, doubled
Very far, very deep, very far.
The sleeping town...